Oxfordshire Guardian

Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington

Thursday, December 7 - Wednesday, December 13, 2017 oxfordshireguardian.co.uk Free

Honoured for their efforts at police awards

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Business teacher jailed for dealing drugs to students

By Samantha McGregor

A TEACHER has been jailed for 15 months after she was caught dealing drugs to pupils at a north Oxfordshire school.

Rachel Ryan, 41, of Fford Bryngwyn, Gorseinon, Swansea, formerly of Banbury, admitted three counts of supplying class C drugs, three counts of importing a class C drug with intent to evade a prohibition/restriction, and one count of possessing a class A drug – heroin.

She was sentenced at Oxford Crown Court on November 24.

Police said Ryan had been working at a school in Banbury, as head of business studies, at the time of the offences. The school was not named.

An investigation revealed she had been dealing Valium and other class C drugs to students.

She was caught after another teacher spotted a pupil texting in class and confiscated the phone.

Further checks revealed the student had been texting Ryan.

When the school checked other messages it contacted police over concerns they related to drugs.

Ryan was suspended by the school and a police investigation launched.

Police said Ryan was selling Valium to pupils and had ordered other class C drugs to be delivered to her address in Banbury.

When she was arrested in June last year police also found a quantity of heroin in her possession.

The total amount of drugs seized had a street value of about £1,900.

Detective Constable Bryan Groves, of Oxford Force CID, said Ryan had "abused" the trust placed in her as a teacher.

He said: "Rachel Ryan used her knowledge gained as the head of business studies in her role as a drug dealer.

"This was seen in one of her text messages where she offered a discounted price if a drug user purchased more than 100 tablets.

"Rachel Ryan had trust placed in her as a teacher. She had responsibilities and should have been someone for her students to look up to. She abused that trust and has let her students down."

> *Ryan used her knowledge as head of business studies in her role as drug dealer... in one of her texts she offered a discounted price if a user purchased more than 100 tablets*
>
> **DC Bryan Groves**

Exhilarating and exhausting, but so worthwhile

Completing the toughest challenge of her life was all worth it for Liz Wilson who scaled Kilimanjaro to raise funds in her friend's memory. See page 3 for full story

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Let the sleigh take the strain this festive season

WITH Christmas around the corner, the UK's fastest sleigh could soon be making its way to Oxfordshire train stations.

Chiltern Railways has unveiled a new festive wrap on one of its silver trains, now dubbed the Chiltern Santa train.

According to the company, the Santa train will fly down the track at 100 miles per hour and is the perfect way for Santa to deliver presents and transport customers between London Marylebone and Birmingham Moor Street.

This comes as part of the company's 'Get Festive' campaign, where specialist train sleigh makers were recruited to install a 'wrap' of Santa's sleigh over a two-day period.

Santa's elves have also been recruited to bring Christmas cheer and will be helping customers at Chiltern stations.

The transformed train will feature on the Chiltern line until after Christmas.

Museum evacuated after fire breaks out

A PLUMBER accidentally started a fire in the basement of an Oxford museum.

Pitt Rivers Museum was evacuated after smoke alarms sounded and firefighters were greeted at the South Parks Road museum by a smoke-logged underground service room after a plumber set light to insulation in a service duct using a gas torch.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue said three fire engines were sent to the museum, and that the 'swift intervention' of the teams safely extinguished the fire, which broke out two floors below the ground floor.

Crews also praised the "quick-thinking" university staff after everyone in the building was safely evacuated on Thursday afternoon last week.

Fire incident commander, watch manager Ricky Thomas said: "I would urge tradespersons that use hot works to take time to review their safe systems of work surrounding the use of such equipment.

"Fortunately, on this occasion, the university had working smoke alarms on each floor and effective emergency plans in place which both resulted in a safe outcome."

InBrief

Driver's sentence appeal rejected

A LORRY driver who killed four people after smashing into stationary traffic on the A34 has had his sentence appeal rejected.

Tomasz Kroker, 30, was changing music on his phone at the time of the crash and was jailed for 10 years for four counts of causing death by dangerous driving after the incident at East Ilsley in August 2016.

The tragic collision caused the vehicle carrying Tracy Houghton, 45 and her sons Ethan, 13 and 11-year-old Josh as well as her partner's 11-year-old daughter Aimee Goldsmith to be pushed underneath a heavy goods vehicle.

The family's Vauxhall Corsa was crushed to a third of its size, immediately killing the family, from Bedfordshire.

A further five people were injured in the eight-vehicle collision.

Kroker appealed the length of his sentence at the Court of Appeal but this was dismissed by Judge Brian Leveson on Friday.

Pubs campaign

STAFF in pubs across north and west Oxfordshire will put up posters and wear t-shirts in the run up to Christmas to promote a campaign raising awareness of violent crime.

Launched by Thames Valley Police and Cherwell and West Oxfordshire district councils, the 'one punch can kill' campaign will begin tomorrow. The campaign is a response to an increase in violence in the two districts.

Visit www.1pck.org.uk for more.

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Seasonal drink drive campaign launches

By George Welch

POLICE are urging drivers to think about the 'pain and misery' that a reckless decision to take drugs or drink before getting behind the wheel can inflict on innocent people.

A month-long campaign that will see an increase in roadside testing to tackle driving under the influence launched last week.

Thames Valley Police launched the campaign as part of Operation Holly to raise awareness but will also be working alongside Hampshire police to carry out operations and extra patrols throughout December.

Road safety sergeant for Hampshire Constabulary, Rob Heard said: "All drivers need to understand the gravity and consequences of their actions if they drink and drive. If you are not sure, then it is not worth the risk."

According to TVP, drug and drink driving is recognised by independent research as one of the 'fatal four' factors that results in collisions that cause people to be killed or seriously injured.

Mr Heard said: "Operation Holly is designed to be a deterrent to any motorist thinking about driving while impaired by the effects of drugs or alcohol.

"The importance of personal responsibility for your choices must be emphasised.

"Please think about the pain and misery you could inflict on innocent road users by a reckless decision to drive or ride after taking drugs or consuming alcohol."

Motorists breaking the law can face a criminal conviction, a prison sentence, driving ban and the loss of their job.

As part of the campaign every driver involved in a collision will be asked to provide a specimen of breath in accordance with the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Mr Heard added: "I ask people to remember particularly that it is not possible specifically to say how much alcohol you can drink and stay below the limit.

"The way alcohol affects you varies depending on your personal characteristics.

"A conviction for drink/drug driving has the potential to ruin a person's life and the incident itself the potential to cause serious injury or death on the roads. It's not worth the risk."

To report a person who is an immediate risk, call 999, otherwise, call 101.

■ A rather different advent calendar has been launched to help prevent burglaries.

Thames Valley Police have launched a campaign urging members of the public to take whatever actions they can to deter burglars, warning that in the last six months there has been a 25 per cent rise in burglaries across the area.

The force has released an online advent calendar on Facebook and Twitter with advice on how to stay safe over the next month.

Officers from neighbourhood policing teams will be offering advice to members of the public.

Detective chief superintendent Richard List, said: "By taking just a few simple measures, particularly at this time of year, you can significantly reduce your risk of being a victim of burglary."

Ex-PM vows to help fight Alzheimer's

FORMER Prime Minister David Cameron has vowed to help raise the profile of Alzheimer's after years of seeing care homes filling up with people 'entering a world of darkness'.

In a rare interview in the Financial Times, the former Witney MP set out his priorities post-premiership.

Speaking to the newspaper, the 51-year-old said: "I saw care home after care home in my constituency filling up with people with dementia who were entering a world of darkness, where they'd become completely disconnected from their surroundings, their relatives, their friends and their lives."

Since he was appointed president of Alzheimer's Research UK in January, Mr Cameron has got together scientists, philanthropists and the pharmaceutical lobby to focus on early diagnosis.

He said: "We don't know where the cure's going to come from, but it will almost certainly be made easier if we have early diagnosis."

Mr Cameron said there is a huge challenge in getting big organisations to pump money into a cure, but added 'we cannot expect pharmaceutical companies to do it for us'.

In 2015, the then-prime minister set two targets: for everyone with dementia to have a personalised care plan by 2020 and a cure or modifying therapy by 2025.

He said: "We're on track to have in a country of sixty million people, a million people with dementia. The cost is already greater than cancer, stroke and heart disease combined. The willingness to donate is going up. We've got to make the most of it."

I'd do it all over again!

Liz climbs Kilimanjaro to raise funds in her friend's memory

By Samantha McGregor

"EXHILARATING, exhausting and surreal" are three words Liz Wilson has used to describe completing the toughest challenge of her life.

Just a few weeks ago the 36-year-old climbed the highest free-standing mountain in the world – Mount Kilimanjaro – in a bid to raise £5,000 in memory of her friend Bethan Reading.

Mum-of-one Bethan died in 2013 and a group of friends set about fundraising for Breast Cancer Now in her honour.

So far, Liz has raised £4,200, from the challenge, but hopes a final push at Bicester's Christmas Market, in Sheep Street, on December 9, will help her edge closer to her target.

Kilimanjaro, also known as the Roof of Africa, is 5,895m (19,341ft) above sea level and she said one of her best moments was reaching the summit.

She said: "It was exhilarating and exhausting at the same time. Almost surreal.

"You spend so long getting up there and then it seems as if all of a sudden you're there, and then heading back down again."

Over the 10-day trek Liz and her fellow walkers were on their feet for six to eight hours a day, but on summit day the group left camp at 1am and had to trek in the dark, higher and higher, towards the peak.

She described her legs feeling like lead, how "disorientating" the darkness was and how the higher she got, the harder it was to breathe.

She said: "I contemplated giving up several times.

"But I just kept thinking about all the people who have supported me and why I was doing it and actually compared to what people who are fighting breast cancer deal with, this really was nothing.

"I frequently thought of Beth and alongside that and a constant internal chant of 'just one more step Liz' I managed to push on.

"More than eight hours after leaving camp, I finally hauled myself up to that famous summit sign at 9.30am. Exhausted but thrilled.

"I've never done anything like this before – but I'd definitely do it again."

As well as taking on the massive challenge, Liz said she had made some 'life-long' friends.

Beth's Pink Ladies had so far raised £48,298 for the charity and next year hope to "smash through" the £50,000 mark.

InBrief

Homes approved

A Scotland-based house builder is making an "important step" forward by taking on its first project in England, in Witney.

Developer Mactaggart & Mickel Homes has been given planning permission to build 62 homes - 31 private houses and 31 affordable - at Milton-under-Wychwood.

Homes will range from two to four bedrooms.

Director Andrew Mickel said it was "delighted" to get the planning green light and hoped to be on-site next May.

Castle Quay fun

FAMILIES can make the most of Christmas at Castle Quay shopping centre this year.

The centre will now be open until 8pm on Thursdays until December 21. During this time, the animatronic polar bear called Bjorn will be visiting the centre from 5pm to 8pm.

This Sunday, shoppers can create lasting Christmas memories with a photograph inside a giant snowglobe 11am to 4pm.

Customers can also take the stress out of their Christmas shopping with the help of the Banbury Angels this Saturday.

From 11am to 4pm the Angels will be on hand to help shoppers find the perfect Christmas gifts.

Located opposite Debenhams, the Angels will use their Bibles to help give gift inspiration as well as information on the latest offers available in Castle Quay Shopping Centre.

For more information visit www.castlequay.co.uk.

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Police and public praised for their selfless actions at commendations

By Eva Astreinidou

THE selfless actions and public spirit of members of the public and police officers were recognised in a special awards ceremony.

People and officers from all walks of life who displayed selfless commitment, leadership and professionalism were recognised by the Commander of Cherwell and West Oxfordshire local police area (LPA) during a ceremony in Kidlington last week.

Members of the public Graham Speke, Lesley Speke and Felicity Hilsdon were recognised for providing CPR to a woman who was drowning.

Superintendant Mark Johns and his management team, who gave out the awards, said the trio's intervention undoubtedly contributed to saving the woman's life and demonstrates a 'high degree of public spiritedness'.

Acting Police Sergeant Kelly Collins was also commended for providing CPR.

Supt Johns said: "It is always a pleasure to recognise the outstanding work of officers and the brave actions of members of the public. Everyone recognised has made a real difference to the lives of other people."

Police Sergeant Katrina Hibbert, Police Sergeant David Keith, Police Sergeant Jade Hewitt and Police Constable Ian Allen were all commended for their hard work in the planning and execution of Operation Refresh, an operation designed to disrupt county drug line groups operating in Banbury.

Detention officer Makayla Evans was also recognised for exhibiting selfless commitment and leadership. In July, she helped stabilise and reassure a car crash casualty who was seriously injured when faced with the incident on the opposite side of the road.

Acting Police Sergeant Neal Templey was commended for his detective skills and ability to motivate others to locate wanted people.

Over a six-month period, the length of time a person was wanted in the LPA, fell.

Police Constable James Lingwood and Police Constable Evonne Letch were also honoured for leading by example when attending a fear for welfare incident, while PCSO Claire Brennan was commended for her courage to ensure a family was safeguarded after a case of domestic abuse.

Officers and members of the public at the awards ceremony and inset, Graham and Lesley Speke

In addition, Police Sergeant David Keith was recognised for his determination and 'consistent quality of work' in bringing offenders to justice.

Matthew Hatt, a member of the public, was commended for his selfless act when assisting an officer with a fear for welfare incident in Banbury.

InBrief

Grants for groups

THOUSANDS of pounds are up for grabs as Banbury Town Council invites local charities and good causes to apply for cash grants.

Up to £40,000 is handed out each year as part of an annual grant scheme that provides financial aid to voluntary and charitable groups which help the people of Banbury.

The deadline for applications is December 15.

For more information or to download a form go to banbury.gov.uk

Cubs make friends

CUB Scouts from 1st Eynsham pack have been learning what it's like to have dementia and how they can help people who are suffering from the condition.

The youngsters, aged between eight and 10, took part in dementia friend activities, part of the Alzheimer's Society's Million Hands partnership.

Vanessa Gregory, of 1st Eynsham Cub Scouts, said: "The session really helped the Cubs understand what life is like for a person with dementia and how we can help.

"We are also hoping to organise a community dementia-friendly activity in the village."

>> Got a story? Contact the newsdesk on 01235 516919

Centre evacuated after chlorine leak

THE town's leisure centre was evacuated after a "potentially serious" chlorine leak.

Firefighters were called out on Wednesday last week just before 7am after the chlorine alarm at Bicester Leisure Centre, in Queens Avenue, was activated.

About 20 customers and staff were evacuated to a nearby school.

Crews donned gas-tight chemical suits and worked with a specialist hazmat officer to find and seal the leak and ventilate the building.

The centre was able to reopen about two hours later at 9am.

Incident Commander, Crew Manager Pete Mackay, of Bicester Fire Station, said: "This incident demonstrates the importance of well-rehearsed plans being put in to place by the centre staff to keep everyone safe, which coupled with our ability to enter with specialist equipment enabled them to be back up and running very quickly.

"We were able to work closely with the staff to ensure a potentially serious incident was quickly and safely resolved."

Have your say on new-look for play area

WITNEY residents are encouraged to have their say on a planned refurbishment of the play area on Ralegh Crescent at Deer Park.

Witney Town Council is leading the project and will be running a consultation stand at the West Witney Primary School Christmas Fayre, next to the park, from midday to 2pm on Saturday.

Locals are urged to go along to give their feedback on what should go in the play area which is popular with youngsters.

Your thoughts and ideas will be used to put together a design brief for playground suppliers to work with, the council said.

The council has provided no timetable for the work.

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News

Meeting hears 'Brexit can be stopped'

'BREXIT can still be stopped' was the message behind a debate organised by a pro-remain group in Oxford.

An audience of more than 200 attended a two-hour meeting organised by Oxford for Europe last week, where they were told that a 'disastrous hard' or no-deal Brexit can still be reversed.

The debate titled Brexit – where do we go from here, included a panel made up of journalists and political scientists, as well as Oxford East MP Anneliese Dodds.

David Blackman of European Movement (Oxford Area) said: "All the speakers urged the need for more positive references to the EU: it has been good for business, good for workers' rights, good for security and good for the environment."

Ms Dodds came under fierce pressure from the audience and fellow panellists at the meeting.

She confirmed her personal views are and have always been pro-remain.

But she claimed she could not yet commit to supporting an amendment to the current Brexit Bill, which would require an act of Parliament before the UK leaves the EU.

She also claimed that her Oxford constituents still favour trying to get the least worst Brexit rather than stopping Brexit, but that the public may well change its mind.

The panel was unanimous in condemning recent statements from government ministers about the existence and content of 58 secret reports on Brexit's economic impact, and described the government's current conduct as 'unprecedented' and a 'threat to our democracy'.

Health services under pressure from more homes and old people

By Samantha McGregor

OXFORDSHIRE'S housing growth and ageing population are "significant challenges" as the county's health authorities plan for the future.

A report for the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's board meeting on November 30 said by 2026 the county would be short by 109 GPs and recruitment was "unlikely" to be met from "current recruitment patterns".

Another major issue was caring for the frail and elderly - the number of people over 60 is expected to increase by 58,100 by 2032.

It comes as about 60,000 new homes are expected to be built in the county in the next 10 years putting increased demand on primary care services.

Last month some operations were cancelled at the John Radcliffe because the service was so overwhelmed.

In a bid to cope with demand OCCG wants bigger surgeries that open in the evenings and weekends to cater for more patients.

There would be more local specialist clinics such as bladder and bowel services, while local optometrists could offer a minor eye conditions service.

Another proposal is to "upskill" health professionals such as pharmacists, physiotherapists and mental health workers who could free up GP time.

OCCG also wants to expand the primary care visiting service so more people could be cared for at home rather than in hospital.

There could also be GPs online via Skype and more group sessions and webinars.

The benefits would include fewer admissions to hospital, care being provided closer to home and consistent access for patients.

To start putting some of the proposals into practice, OCCG said in 2017/18 it would need an extra £1.9m.

The report said: "Primary care is the cornerstone of the NHS in Oxfordshire, GPs are the first point of contact for most people and they play a co-ordinating role for each patient's journey across clinical pathways and provider organisations.

"There are significant challenges. These include: A changing population with a dramatic projected increase in the number of older people presenting with multiple and complex conditions…

"Plans for rapid growth in housing fuelling demand for GP appointments…"

It said work pressure was "lowering the morale of GPs" and led to problems retaining doctors.

The board is due to meet again in January.

OCCG said the shortage of GPs was a national problem and primary care funding had not "kept up with other services".

Drugs charge

AN Oxford man has been remanded in custody after he was charged with a drugs offence.

Erald Mema, 32, formerly of Awgar Stone Road, was charged with conspiracy to supply cocaine.

Mema was arrested in Bicester on November 23 and was charged the following day when he appeared at Oxford Crown Court.

He was remanded in custody and will appear at the same court on December 22.

The charge relates to conspiracy to supply cocaine from July 3, 2016 to December 2, 2016.

Branches to close

SIX NatWest branches across Oxfordshire are to close next year, the bank has announced.

Branches in Wantage (May 23), Chipping Norton (May 31), Didcot (June 7), Wallingford (June 11), Kidlington (June 13) and North Oxford (June 21) will all shut .

The company cited declining footfall and the increased popularity of online banking for the closures.

The announcement is part of a nationwide closure programme by RBS, which owns NatWest. Nearly 700 staff will lose their jobs.

NatWest recently opened a branch in Cornmarket Street.

Ambulance crew quizzed over emergency call leak of George Michael's death

By Eva Astreinidou

Picture: Frantogian

AMBULANCE staff were questioned by police after an emergency call made following the death of pop star George Michael, was leaked.

The singer was found dead by his partner Fadi Fawaz at his home in Goring-on-Thames, on Christmas Day last year.

Now, a Freedom of Information request has revealed that Thames Valley Police had 'sufficient suspicion' to interview staff members from South Central Ambulance service.

In the document obtained by the journalism department of Highbury College near Portsmouth, it says police launched an investigation in May following the release of the 999 call made by Mr Fawaz.

The document reads: "A man and a woman were voluntarily interviewed under caution as part of the investigation.

"No arrests were made and no further action was taken in relation to the two people."

A statement issued by solicitors said the star's family and friends were "truly appalled" that the call was made public.

It continued: "It is deeply distressing to the family that this transcript, and audio recording, has been made public."

How and where the leak happened has not yet been concluded.

Mr Michael was 53 when he died at his home from heart disease and a build-up of fat in his liver.

The singer had a string of hits as part of Wham! in the 1980s before going on to establish a very successful solo career enjoying seven number ones in the UK.

Shoppers evacuated after alarm goes off at Primark

MASSES of people were rushed out of Oxford's Westgate after emergency sirens went off in Primark.

The centre confirmed the evacuation took place due to a customer 'accidentally pressing an alarm'.

Sirens were sounded in the Primark store at 12.40pm on Sunday and customers were told to get out.

Customers dropped their shopping and were ushered out to Castle Street and walked up to Bonn Square.

At 5.53pm a spokesperson tweeted: "We can confirm that a partial evacuation of #WestgateOxford took place earlier today. This was caused by a member of the public accidentally pressing a fire alarm call point. As part of routine procedure a few minutes was taken to fully investigate before the all clear was given."

Twitter user Smiler said: "Westgate evacuated... no security staff, nobody really sure what to do other than try to make way out to street. Seriously lack of exits and co-ordination."

William Lehmann tweeted: "There was no evacuation procedure at all. Needs to be better organised with shop staff trained to deal with such a situation. More fire exit signs clearly needed. @Oxfordwestgate Very very poor. Just glad it wasn't a real emergency. Please sort it out."

Primark spokeswoman Elizabeth Kittle said: "We can confirm the Primark store was quickly evacuated in an orderly fashion and in line with standard safety procedures, which comply with fire safety legislation.

"We are satisfied that our employees acted in a calm and professional manner.

"All Primark employees receive comprehensive fire safety training and regular fire drills are conducted in stores."

Three vehicles involved in A34 crash

TWO people were treated after a lorry, a caravan and two cars were involved in a crash on the A34.

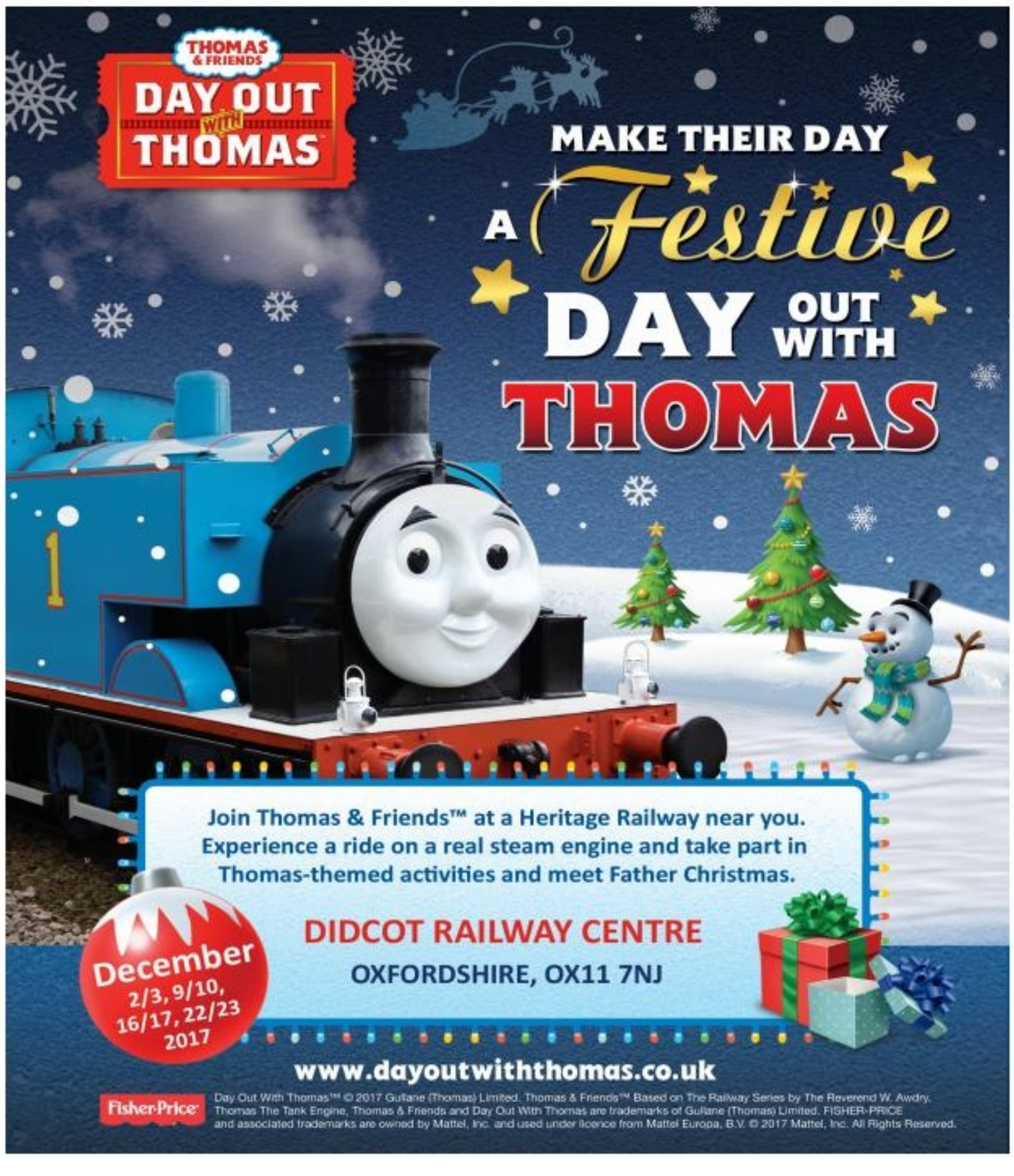
Police and emergency services were on the scene of the collision near the Marcham interchange shortly after 6.10am on Monday.

Three vehicles - a heavy goods vehicle, a Landrover towing a caravan, and a car were involved in the crash.

Two people sustained injuries and received medical treatment.

The A34 northbound between the Abingdon north and Oxford south junctions was closed for the morning after the crash.

The southbound carriageway was reopened at 9am but was heavily congested. Drivers were advised of other routes to take.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News

Singers hit the right note with fundraising message at station

By Samantha McGregor

NORTH Oxfordshire commuters were in for a festive treat when a flash-mob broke into song at a busy station.

As December began, Marylebone Station came alive with Christmas cheer after 40 professional signers performed Handel's Hallelujah Chorus and a host of carols.

Conducted by musical director Nicholas Cleobury and accompanied by trumpeter Kevin Kay-Bradley, commuters from Bicester, Banbury and Oxford enjoyed the festive surprise.

The event was in aid of Singing for Syrians, a charity initiative set up in 2015 by North Oxfordshire MP Victoria Prentis.

Mrs Prentis joined the singers at the station.

She said: "When the first singer broke into song everyone around her was completely taken aback, particularly as she was dressed in Chiltern Railways uniform.

"As others joined in across the station, it was an extraordinary sound and sight which really did raise the roof.

"The whole point of Singing for Syrians is to show that we all have the power to do something.

"By coming together in a positive and uplifting way, and singing at the tops of our voices, we can all make a difference.

"The flash mob could not have made that clearer."

Mrs Prentis is urging people to host their own event or join the London concert at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, on Tuesday, December 12.

Last year's Westminster choir was made up of a group of cross-party MPs, including Robert Buckland, former MPs Fiona MacTaggart and Nicola Blackwood, with performances from celebrities Simon Callow, Alexander Armstrong and Michael Morpurgo.

Now in its third year, Singing for Syrians raises money for the Hands Up Foundation, a charity which pays the salaries of doctors and funds prosthetic limb clinics in the region.

The MP said it was estimated more than 30,000 Syrians are amputees in need of urgent treatment.

Since it started the initiative has raised more than £140,000 for the charity.

For more information go to singingforsyrians.com

To see video of the flash mob go to: https://youtu.be/RVaJbY9RJ3o

Amnesty for Blue Badge 'abusers'

BLUE badge abusers have been given an amnesty window to hand any misused disabled badges back to Oxfordshire County Council.

The council said abusers have until Sunday to hand their badges in – no questions asked.

Last year, 600 badges were checked and 12 removed, with 10 warnings issued that resulted in two prosecutions.

Oxfordshire County Council is now offering the chance for drivers who are not genuine badge holders to do the right thing and hand them in.

Examples of abuse include: using someone else's badge, having an out of date badge, a dead person's badge, having improved mobility or using a badge when the badge holder is not travelling in the car.

Cllr Judith Heathcoat, cabinet member for customer services, said: "The blue badge service is a lifeline for many disabled people who cannot travel far from their vehicle.

"We would like to give the opportunity to people who may be misusing blue badges to dispose of them and avoid further prosecution."

Motorists can hand badges in at County Hall, at any library around the country or send them to: Blue Badge Service, PO Box 873, Oxford, OX1 9NY.

Misuse of a blue badge can result in removal of the badge, a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record.

More than 22,000 people across the county have a blue badge issued to help with mobility.

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Can you offer Swift a home for Christmas?

By Eva Astreinidou

A nine-year-old pony that had a traumatic start to life is looking for a loving home for Christmas.

Animal charity Blue Cross is appealing for help in finding a home for Swift the pony who was part of a large group of horses that were beaten and neglected.

The adorable pony has come a long way after she and the other horses were rescued and housed at the charity's rehoming centre in Burford last year where inspectors found they were put in cattle crushes and often beaten.

Inspectors also found dead horses all over the farm being eaten by starving dogs when they arrived at the site.

Their owner was later prosecuted by the animal charity.

Blue Cross Burford horse rehoming manager, Vicki Alford, said: "Swift is completely adorable - she looks like a Thelwell pony.

"She had never known love and care before she arrived at Blue Cross and due to her traumatic past she will never be a ridden horse but would be fantastic as a companion.

"After seeing some of her fellow stablemates go off to loving homes it would be great if we could get Swift a new family in time for Christmas.

"We are looking for a quiet new home with people experienced in using positive reinforcement training and who will not put pressure on Swift.

"So far she can target beautifully and has had all four feet pick up and been groomed all over but her new owner will have to be patient and give her the time to get used to her new surroundings."

If you are interested in rehoming Swift visit bluecross.org.uk.

NHS trust to be sentenced over death in March

AN NHS trust which admitted a breach of health and safety regulations after a patient died will be sentenced in March.

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust admitted the single charge relating to the death of teenager Connor Sparrowhawk, at an earlier hearing.

The trust was back at Oxford Crown Court on November 27 to set a date for sentencing.

A decision has yet to be made which judge will hear the case so two dates for a two-day hearing have been set down – March 12 and March 19.

Connor, 18, who had learning disabilities and autism, drowned in a bath after an epileptic fit at Slade House in Headington on July 4, 2013. The facility has now closed.

In 2016 the trust admitted responsibility for his death. They issued an apology and agreed to pay Connor's family £80,000 compensation.

Connor's mother Sara Ryan has been campaigning for those responsible for his death to be held to account.

A second Health & Safety Executive prosecution for the death of Teresa Colvin has be joined with Connor's case. She died while under the supposed care of Southern Health at Woodhaven Adult Mental Health Hospital in Calmore, Southampton in April 2012.

Man charged over fatal crash

A MAN has appeared in court for causing death by dangerous driving following a three-vehicle crash in Witney.

Stephen Horwood, aged 37, of Green Hill, Oxford, was charged on November 24 with causing death by dangerous driving.

The charge relates to a fatal collision which occurred on September 7 on the A415 Duckington, Witney, between a white Transit Van, red Peugeot and silver Mercedes Vito.

The driver of the Peugeot sadly died as a result of the collision and the passenger sustained serious injuries.

Horwood has been remanded to appear at Oxford Crown Court on December 22.

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News

Road named after town legend

By Samantha McGregor

LEGENDARY campaigner, former mayor and councillor George Parish has been immortalised in a Banbury street.

On Saturday fellow councillors cut a ribbon to officially open George Parish Road at new estate Banbury Rise.

Mr Parish died last November after battling Alzheimer's disease for several years.

Before he became ill he led a successful campaign to stop Banbury's Horton Hospital being downgraded in 2008, endearing him to people of the town.

He was also a long-serving town and district councillor, former Cherwell District Council chairman and was awarded an Honorary Burgess of Banbury – the town's highest honour – in 2014.

He earned the nick-name 'Rock 'n' Roll Mayor' after his themed fundraising ball during his mayoral year in 1995 to 1996.

Mr Parish's family, fellow Labour councillors and Cherwell's current chairman Cllr Maurice Billington and his consort Cllr Chris Heath, together with Banbury Rise developer Bloor, gathered as the road was unveiled.

Cllr Mark Cherry, Labour town, district and county councillor, said Mr Parish was "loved" by constituents and fellow councillors and was the reason he got into local politics.

Mr Cherry instigated the memorial and in just 24 hours was able to confirm a road could be named after local hero Mr Parish.

He then worked with council officers at both the town and district council and Bloor Homes to make it a reality.

He said: "The late Labour councillor George Parish's political legacy will now carry on with a road named George Parish Road. It's been an honour to be part of making this happen."

Cllr Billington said: "We are very proud to be opening George Parish Road along with our partners. We could not choose a better name to mark this new area with Banbury's local history.

"George Parish deserved to be recognised as 'people's champion' having served as a Labour district councillor for more than 20 years and everyone in Banbury felt an immense sense of loss at his passing last year.

"He dedicated his life to public service, campaigning on several occasions to defend the Horton as a fully functional district general hospital."

Sean Woodcock, Labour group leader, said: "This is the least that George deserves.

"He was loved by everyone regardless of their politics.

"He is a true Banbury legend."

Family, friends and fellow councillors gathered to officially name George Parish Road after the former mayor who died last year

Pullman's novel book of the year

PHILIP Pullman's latest novel has been named the Book of the Year by book chain Waterstones.

The Oxford author returned to the world of His Dark Materials with the publication La Belle Sauvage in October, 17 years after he finished the original trilogy.

The 71-year-old pipped six other candidates to the award after Waterstones staff nominated books they found "truly outstanding and which they have felt most pride in recommending and selling".

Mr Pullman told the BBC he was "very happy" to be awarded a prize given by a bookseller.

He said: "Booksellers are an absolutely necessary part of the complex ecology of the book world.

"These days the pressure of so many kinds of digital and social and economic and political change is forcing the world of books, like so many others, to evolve more swiftly than is sometimes comfortable."

Waterstones managing director James Daunt said: "This is a winner that is going to bring a lot of pleasure to an ever-widening audience and we could not be more pleased to play our part in its success."

Visit tinyurl.com/yatpd88a for a special edition of Mr Pullman's latest work.

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News

Students pick up life skills at The Shop

STUDENTS with special educational needs are now running on-campus shops at local colleges to gain valuable life and employment skills.

The shops at Activate Learning's City of Oxford College and Banbury and Bicester College stock a range of stationery, snacks and soft drinks.

As part of their day-to-day role, the students carry out tasks such as cashing up, banking and ordering stock, alongside their English and maths lessons.

The profits from the shops will help fund employment support for the learners when they leave Activate Learning, an Oxford-based education and training group that runs schools and colleges across the county.

Janet Johnson, Oxfordshire County Council's strategic lead for vulnerable learners, opens the City of Oxford College shop

Speaking about helping the students engage with employers in the future, Lifeskills faculty director, Michelle Parks said: "This [scheme] will enable us to grow and engage further with local and national employers to collaborate on designing new programmes.

"Our learning companies provide all of the necessary training to enable SEN learners to progress into supported internships and paid work."

Oxfordshire County Council's cabinet member for education Hilary Hibbert-Biles said: "This is a great initiative which is providing young people valuable employment experience, while developing confidence, social skills and teamwork in a supportive and busy working environment."

Help those in need to enjoy a Christmas lunch with others

A LOCAL charity hopes to give all disadvantaged people a place at the table this Christmas.

Aspire Oxford wants to raise £8,000 through a new winter appeal in time for its Big Christmas Lunch on December 14.

The event invites those who may be homeless, unemployed, in recovery or single parents living in poverty to have a seat at the table instead of facing Christmas alone.

The money raised will help pay for the lunch, a Christmas gift for the participants, as well as long-term support from the service.

The event is held in partnership with Oxford Homeless Project, Camerados and Rose Hill Regeneration Project.

Food will be provided by Mid-Counties Co-operative in Rose Hill.

To find out more about the Place at the Table appeal or to make a donation visit https://tinyurl.com/yan3swcr.

Claus with a cause

Thousands set to join Santa Run for Helen & Douglas House on city streets

By George Welch

HO ho ho! Oxford will glow red this weekend as more than 2,500 jolly Santas run, jog, walk, skip and dance their way round Helen & Douglas House's annual fun run.

The ever-popular festive 3.5k is expected to be bigger and better than ever, with thousands gearing up in aid of the good cause of helping local terminally ill children and young adults.

The charity's events fundraising manager, Hannah Barrett, said: "The Santa Run is such an atmospheric, wonderfully fun morning for the whole family.

"Seeing over 2,000 people dressed as Santas together running or walking through the beautiful city of Oxford is amazing."

She added: "Taking part means that everyone has great fun at the start of the festive season, and at the same time they are helping raise money so that the charity can provide specialist care for terminally ill children and young adults.

"We rely on donations to run the hospice service and without the support of the community we would not be here for the families who need us."

The 11th Helen & Douglas House Santa Run event starts in Broad Street at 9am on Sunday and goes through University Parks.

Last year 2,200 Santas of all ages donned bright red suits to help raise funds for the Oxford charity.

It costs more than £5million a year to run the two hospice houses in Oxford and provide its outreach nursing service.

It's not too late to sign up for the festive fun and claim your free Santa suit to help raise important funds.

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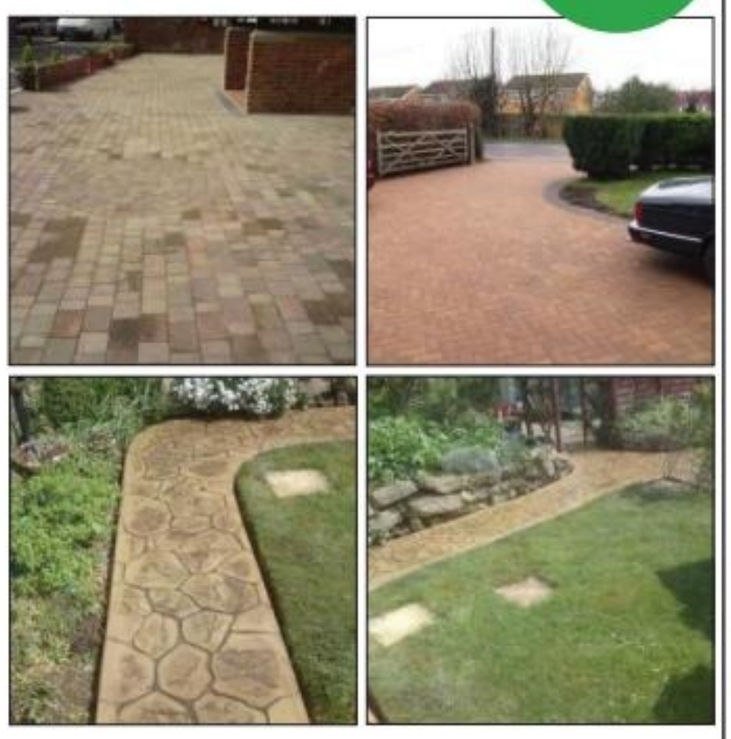

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two children) is priced at £58, while adults can join in the fun for £19 and children (aged five to 11) for £12. Under fives can take part for free.

Runners are also asked to raise £30 per Santa.

The event is wheelchair and buggy friendly – there will also be free goodie bags and mince pies.

For more information on this year's event and to sign up visit tinyurl.com/yb58lwm4

Drivers urged to take care as winter begins

THE county's fire service is urging drivers to take extra care as winter draws in and temperatures drop.

Winter weather and longer periods of darkness make driving more hazardous.

Andy Ford, road safety manager at Oxfordshire County Council's Fire & Rescue Service, said: "Reduced visibility and slippery road surfaces make winter driving more difficult.

"We would like to encourage drivers to adjust to road conditions, whether it's frost, ice, fog, heavy rain or a low winter sun, please slow down and allow yourself time to react.

"It's not just about preparing yourself but your vehicle – checking your tyres and lights, keeping a kit with an ice scraper, de-icer, hazard warning triangle, torch and high visibility jacket in your vehicle."

Man cut free after hedgerow crash

A MAN had to be cut from his car after it left the road and crashed in to the hedgerow on a countryside road.

Fire and rescue teams were called to reports of a car that had left the road in Kirtlington on November 29 at 9.15am.

Oxfordshire crews arrived within minutes and found a single vehicle had left the road and crashed in to the hedgerow.

The driver was trapped in the car while firefighters and ambulance staff provided immediate medical assistance.

Station manager Paul Webster said: "This was a serious incident. I would like to take this opportunity to remind drivers to consider the changing road conditions as winter approaches."

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Oxford Castle unlocks secret to win award

SEVEN Oxfordshire tourist institutions were honoured at the Beautiful South Awards for Excellence in Brighton last week.

The awards recognise and celebrate excellence in the tourism sector with the aim of inspiring other businesses to reinvest and raise standards in quality, innovation and customer service.

Blenheim Palace was crowned Large Visitor Attraction of the Year and Oxford Castle Unlocked won Small Visitor Attraction of the Year.

Oxford Castle Unlocked marketing manager Saffron Bowdler said: "The castle has played such an important role in the development of our city and it's a pleasure to bring the site's 1,000 years of history to life.

"We are over the moon that the team's commitment to delivering a first class attraction has been recognised with this gold award."

Restaurant 56 at the Sudbury House Hotel in Faringdon won the Best Restaurant/Bistro of the Year.

Other awards included: Oxford's Visitor Information Centre, silver in the Information Service of the Year; Baskerville in Henley-on-Thames, silver in the Pub of the Year; The Chesnuts in Shilton, silver in the Self-Catering Business of the Year and Wisteria Cottage in Watlington, highly commended in the Sustainable Tourism Award.

From left, Emily Hirons, Chris Abbott and Saffron Bowdler of Oxford Castle Unlocked celebrate being named the Small Visitor Attraction of the Year in the Beautiful South East awards

Festival of Christmas trees

GROUPS and organisations in Adderbury have been busy decorating Christmas trees for an annual festival.

St Mary's Church will be transformed into a festive wonderland over three days, culminating with a carol concert.

People can drop in to see the festive display on December 8 and 9, from 10am to 4pm, and December 10 from midday until 4pm, followed by a family Victorian Carol Service which starts at 4.30pm.

All of the trees are sponsored by local organisations, businesses and groups and have been decorated in fun, creative and imaginative ways.

Visitors can vote for their favourite tree. The Rev Stephen Fletcher, said: "Our church makes a wonderful setting for a Christmas tree festival. As well as looking at the beautiful trees, visitors can explore the church and enjoy some seasonal refreshments and musical entertainment.

"It's a great way to start the festive season. This is the fourth year the festival has run and we are incredibly grateful to our sponsors."

On Saturday, bellringers will mark the start of the festival and will be on hand to talk to people and visitors will get the chance to climb into the tower and see the ringing room.

Donations will go to the church restoration fund.

Cheer ARCh and help them win £2,000

SUPPORT local reading charity ARCh in the Starbucks Cheer for Good campaign and the group could be awarded £2,000.

Assisted Reading for Children, based in Bicester, has been nominated to take part in the coffee chain's charity campaign by customers and staff.

Starbucks is celebrating the work of 150,000 causes by inviting supporters to cheer them on social media.

Use the hashtag #CheerforGood and @Archoxfordshire until December 20 – the top 30 with the loudest cheer will receive £2,000.

For more information go to starbucks.co.uk/cheerforgood

MP turns spotlight on a taboo subject

By George Welch

IT is an "outrage" that thousands of girls have to skip school because they cannot afford sanitary products, an Oxfordshire MP has claimed.

Speaking at Westminster Hall last week, Oxford West and Abingdon MP Layla Moran attacked Chancellor Philip Hammond for failing to commit the funding needed to end 'period poverty'.

The Liberal Democrat used "one of my most embarrassing moments" during the debate to illustrate her point on the 'taboo' subject.

Ms Moran, a former school teacher, said: "It was the first week of a new school, I was 12, and I was feeling very out of place and very lost and I hear a teacher beckon me from the top of a stairwell.

"I walk towards her, 'yes miss, what did I do wrong?', I was convinced that something was wrong.

"She said 'don't worry, everything's fine, but I wanted to let you know that you've got a stain of blood on your skirt', and of course it was not fine, I looked behind, and indeed on my light blue uniform there was such a stain.

Layla Moran MP speaking in Parliament last week

"My face went red, and then it went white, and then I went to the bathroom and I remember crying and when I stopped crying I called my mum and she came and I went home.

"She had in fact brought another skirt, but I was just so mortified by how many people might have seen it and not said anything."

She added: "For me that was a once off but for thousands of girls in this country, not being able to afford the sanitary products and missing school because of it is a regular occurrence.

"It's an outrage that in a country as wealthy as Britain that we let this happen."

Ms Moran said she was disappointed the chancellor didn't make funding available in last month's budget so schools could stock sanitary products – but that £1bn could be found for their deal with coalition partner DUP.

Ms Moran discussed the issue with the Minister for Women Anne Milton and her next step is to convince the government to commit to research and more funding provisions.

News

Timely reminder from RSPCA

AN animal protection charity is reminding people that a dog is for life and not just Christmas as it prepares for a deluge of calls about in-need animals.

The RSPCA revealed last week that its inspectors received a total of 889 calls from Oxfordshire about sick, neglected or abused animals between December 1 and December 31, last year.

There were 31 calls across the county on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day alone.

The figures come as the charity launches its Kindness at Christmas appeal to help thousands of animals facing neglect and cruelty this festive season.

From poorly, unwanted pets callously dumped on the streets to animals and wildlife deliberately cruelly treated, RSPCA officers are preparing to see heartbreaking cruelty and neglect over the next couple of months.

A total of 13,265 incidents – including 366 during Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day – were reported across the south east in December last year and January 2017.

The figure increased to 118,799 calls nationwide in the same time period, the equivalent of 1,916 calls a day and 1.3 calls a minute.

RSPCA superintendent Simon Osborne said: "It's a sad fact that every day at work throughout the year can be tough for our inspectors and animal welfare and collection officers, but winter really does come with its own challenges and issues.

"We expect to take in somewhere in the region of 19,000 animals [nationwide] this winter alone."

To donate to the appeal, visit www.rspca.org.uk/winterappeal.

Pointless host's career advice

BBC TV presenter and comedian Alexander Armstrong shared career advice with Oxford pupils last week.

Mr Armstrong dropped into Oxford's New College School to share stories and advice about the world of show business with about 180 people.

It was the fifth in a series run by New College School, which invited pupils and teachers from nearby local independent and state schools to join the session.

Mr Armstrong, best known as part of comedy duo Armstrong and Miller and BBC quiz show Pointless, spoke to pupils about his media career, comedy writing, TV presenting and radio broadcasting.

The event is funded by the Holloway family, who had four sons at New College School, and the lecture programme aims to introduce pupils to inspirational speakers from a variety of professional fields.

From left, Lord Howard of Lympne, chair of Hospice UK; Dr Marilyn Relf; Martin McMillan, chairman of the National Garden Scheme and Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, vice president, Hospice UK

Honoured for 35 years of bereavement care

A DEVOTED care worker who dedicated her 35-year career to helping with bereavement at an Oxford hospice has been recognised with a lifetime achievement award.

Dr Marilyn Relf's career, which has seen her become one of the UK's national pioneers and leading experts in her field, spans across three decades at Sobell House, Oxfordshire's largest hospice.

Ahead of her retirement this month, she was handed the Anne Norfolk Lifetime Achievement Award at the Hospice UK awards in Liverpool.

Dr Relf said it was "an honour" to collect her award last month, adding: "It was wonderful to be part of the pioneering days of hospice care."

During her career, Dr Relf led the introduction of Sobell House's family bereavement service, which became one of the first of its kind in the UK.

She was head of education at the Churchill Hospital-based hospice for 10 years, influencing and teaching hundreds of health and social care staff at the hospice.

She also contributed to research papers and books about bereavement care.

Sobell House clinical lead Dr Mary Miller said: "Dr Relf is renowned for her scientific rigour in understanding issues and professionally interrogating solutions. This is combined with a wise, humane, compassionate and creative personality.

"It is fitting that Dr Relf concludes her career later this year with such a prestigious and well-deserved lifetime achievement award from Hospice UK."

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Graduates seeking jobs to make a contribution

By Samantha McGregor

GRADUATES in Oxford are looking for "emotional rewards" and "personal fulfilment" from their jobs, new research shows.

A survey by the Department for Education's Get into Teaching campaign talked to 3,000 students nationwide, who were about to enter the job market, including 104 in Oxford.

Based on the Oxford figures, 52 per cent said their career motivation was to "make a positive contribution to society".

Three quarters – 76 per cent – felt emotional rewards were more important than practical ones, while almost a third – 31 per cent - were also looking for a job that will "make them feel proud".

The survey showed young people see teaching as a job that offers job security and a career progression path.

It comes as Get into Teaching announced its latest teacher training grants, including £26,000 tax-free bursary to train as a teacher in key subjects including science, computing, geography and languages and £30,000 to train to teach maths.

Keith Ryan moved from research into teaching chemistry

Roger Pope, spokesperson for the Get Into Teaching campaign, and chairman of the National College for Teaching and Leadership, said the survey showed teaching was an option for many graduates.

He said: "It marries the things that this cohort cares most about: helping make a difference to other people and the world around us, whilst also allowing committed and dedicated professionals to pursue their own career goals.

"As a lifelong teacher myself, I see how young people's attitudes and ambitions change with the generations, which is something that helps to keep the teaching profession fresh too."

Keith Ryan, a science teacher from The Oxford Academy, in Oxford, said he was "proud" to be a teacher and would encourage others to train.

He said: "I had always been extremely interested in chemistry, but after 10 years in research I wanted a new challenge.

"Ultimately, I wanted a career that was rewarding and teaching ticks all the boxes – I get to inspire people in a subject I'm passionate about, it is full of emotional rewards and I feel like I'm doing something worthwhile every day.

"It is also a structured profession where I have been supported and encouraged to develop my skills and progress."

Go to getintoteaching.education.gov.uk for more information.

Father Christmas joins the exhibits at Banbury Museum for festive fun

FATHER Christmas has taken his seat at Banbury Museum to meet children and their families at a special Winter Wonderland Grotto.

Visitors can follow a festive trail around the museum and galleries until December 23.

Suzi Wild, the museum's education manager, said: "This will be a magical time for all and we're so looking forward to helping Father Christmas meet the children of Banbury."

For tickets go to banburymuseum.org/christmas

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News

Sleigh full of gifts for sick children

By George Welch

A SLEIGH brimming with presents and a record breaking £450 have been raised to help bring smiles to children in hospital this Christmas.

Generous shoppers are digging deep to make fundraising group Play2Give's Christmas toy appeal the most successful yet.

Our charity of the year raised the gifts at a three-day in-store collection at Tesco Didcot at the end of last month and will be at Sainsbury's tomorrow to collect toys for youngsters at Oxford Children's Hospital.

Mr Play2Give, 29-year-old Andy Baker, said it has been heart-warming to receive so many donations so far, including a bundle worth £2,700 from charity Changing Lives Didcot.

Andy, who said this year's Sleigh2Give drive is shaping up to beat last year's effort of 3,000 gifts worth £18,000, said: "This year the support from Tesco [store customers] has been even more amazing than previous years.

"At the end of the weekend the sleigh was brimming over with new toys and gifts and some had to be put on the table. A record amount was donated to the charity pots – more than £450 – beating last year's total of £343."

Andy, along with his elves, will deliver the goods on December 17. The team will meet many of the youngsters with the help of sponsors Go Green Taxis and Didcot Mayor, Jackie Billington.

There will be a trolley for donations in Sainsbury's Didcot tomorrow (Friday) and St Birinus School – Andy's former school in Didcot – have a fundraising day on December 15.

For more information, or to donate towards the drive, visit tinyurl.com/ycv9bw44

Play2Give supporters Maggie Ingram and Linda Latter with Andy Baker

Top award for mobility firm

AN OXFORDSHIRE based company that helps disabled people get mobile has won a national award.

Ability Matters Group, whose headquarters are in Abingdon, was named the UK's leading scooter and powered wheelchair dealership at the annual Motability Scheme awards.

The award for large fleet Dealer of the Year recognised outstanding service to customers of the Motability Scheme, and was based on direct customer feedback.

The firm was given a customer rating of 9.8 out of 10.

Commercial manager Lyndon Reeks said the award demonstrated the company's "exceptional commitment" in going above and beyond for its customers.

He said: "We are so proud to have won such an esteemed award.

"The team at our Motability Dealership in Oxford – as well as our other specialist retail outlets across the UK - work tirelessly to ensure our customers are safely mobile, without interruption, every day of the year, and we're thrilled to be recognised for it."

The Motability Scheme is an initiative whereby people can lease a mobility package to help them maintain their independence.

>> Got a story? Contact the newsdesk on 01235 516919

Customers helped restaurant boss to scoop award

A CHEF in Oxford who has won a prestigious award for his authentic take on Indian cuisine says it's down to loyal costumers who voted for him.

Loylu Miah, manager of Cowley Road's beloved Majiliss restaurant, was crowned Oxfordshire winner at this year's International Indian Chef of the Year.

The awards are voted for by customers, which he says 'means more than anything'.

He said: "The award is a really big deal to me. I am really proud."

Awards organiser Nijam M Rahman explained: "Majliss was voted the very best Indian restaurant in Oxfordshire on the basis of customer service, quality of food, ambience and value for money.

"In all four of those categories Mr Miah got a top result."

Mr Miah and his wife Narjuhan have been running the business for nine years.

Speaking about the recent accolade, she said: "It means so much to be considered. We have both been in the curry business for quite a while now, my parents used to run a restaurant as well. It's costumers who voted for us and it's great from that point of view."

For Mr Miah and his three brothers, the award comes after four decades of cooking and serving Indian food around Oxford.

Their father left Bangladesh for the UK in 1972, opening the Moon Light restaurant in Cowley Road the following year.

The business grew and moved to Kidlington High Street, where it eventually became Tiffins Tandoori.

Following a makeover in 2002, billionaire and then-Kidlington resident Richard Branson reopened it.

Mr Miah now manages Majliss with the help of his brothers.

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News

Musician drums up confidence

By Eva Astreinidou

A ONCE shy Oxfordshire teenager now has something to bang the drum about after performing on one of the most-famous stages in the country.

Talented percussionist Jo Sancio, 18, recently joined fellow Oxfordshire County Youth Orchestra musicians at London's Royal Albert Hall for a special concert marking the end of a national competition.

Just four years ago, she went into care with her confidence low but was encouraged to follow her passion.

She said: "I was so shy when I was younger – I wouldn't have even picked up the phone to you and the first few months after coming into care were very difficult.

"My foster carer has been amazing. She kind of pushed me a bit and gave me the confidence to pursue the things that interest me.

"She took me to see my first concert – an orchestra performing at Dorchester Abbey. I loved it and that's what got me into classical music – and percussion in particular."

The musician's journey to the RAH as part of one of the nation's best youth orchestras is all the more remarkable as she only started with the county music service three-and-a-half years ago – most of the musicians had been performing for longer.

Jo Sancio recently performed at the Royal Albert Hall

The performance didn't go entirely without a hitch though, with the conductor for one of the pieces asking the percussionists to play an entirely new part on the night, having initially given them the wrong score.

Ms Sancio said: "There was a whole section no one had played before so we just had to improvise, which was pretty funny."

Adding another string to her bow, Ms Sancio was recently appointed chair of Oxfordshire's children in care council, ensuring the voices of looked-after children are heard.

She's currently working with young colleagues on safeguarding issues to help inform and improve local services, while also preparing to sit her A-levels to fulfil her ambitions of studying a fine art degree at university.

Illustrator draws pupils' attention as he opens new library

CHILDREN'S book illustrator Korky Paul drew a crowd as he opened a new library at an Oxford primary school.

Windale Community Primary School fundraised through non-uniform days, cake sales and fairs in an effort to buy new books and equipment for the £10,000 refurbishment.

Mr Paul, who lives in Oxford, led a whole-school assembly, during which he drew a special edition picture of his 1987 award-winning creation Winnie the Witch, which he gifted to the school.

Staff and children at the Windale Avenue school cheered as he cut the ribbon to open the facility last month.

Headteacher Katie Geran-Haq said: "The children are excited to have an on-site library to access a whole range of reading material, including non-fiction, picture books, novels and comics.

"We also have an online 'reading cloud' with e-books where children can review what they have read and blog about their reading."

Work on the project began in September 2016 and was completed last month.

InBrief

Junior parkrunners

CHILDREN looking to get more active now have the opportunity to join Oxfordshire's first weekly parkrun event for juniors.

The junior parkrun sessions, open to children aged four to 14 years, will kick off every Sunday at 9am from Brookes Sport Botley.

Runners need to register online prior to attending and bring their barcode with them for the free event.

Visit parkrun.org.uk/register/

Visit Santa's grotto

HILLTOP Garden Store is getting into the festive spirit with a free Christmas Grotto.

Children and their families can meet Santa at the Chipping Norton store every weekend until December 17, and then every day until Christmas Eve.

Go to gardenstoreonline.co.uk or call 01993 868403.

Rural crime rises

POLICE have reassured rural communities after reports of rural crime in the Thames Valley increased by five per cent between October 2016 and September 2017.

Officers are working with residents, businesses and partners to raise awareness of crime prevention techniques while developing solutions to tackle rural crime. Visit tinyurl.com/yd4bf2ec for more information.

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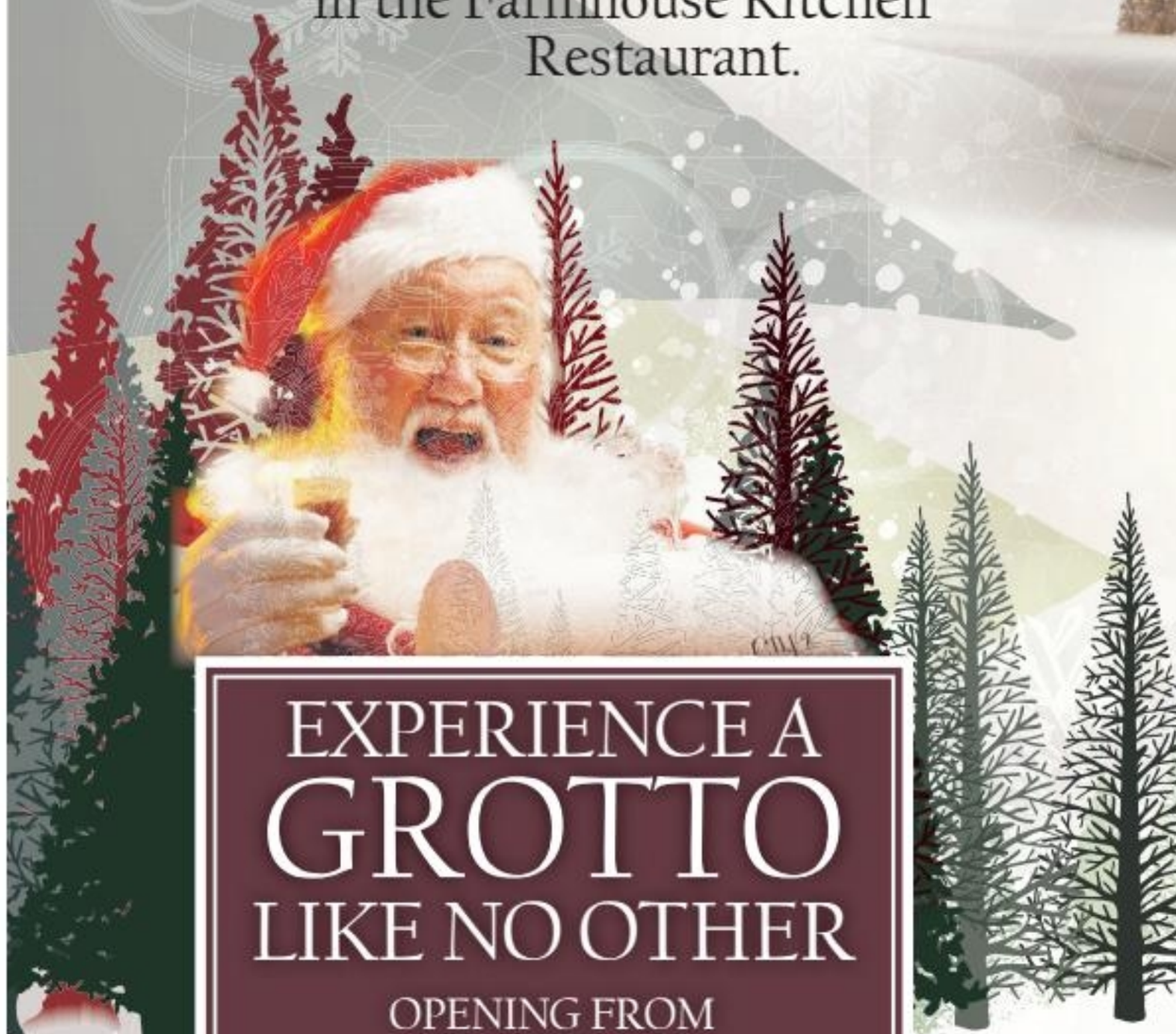

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Out & About

In the market for Christmas gifts...?

Festive fare in Broad Street

Seasonal show for the whole family to enjoy – see inside

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Out & About

Festive food and great gifts

CHRISTMAS markets are a popular part of the festive season and a great place to get some unique gifts so you won't want to miss out on Oxford's which starts today.

Around 60 festive stalls will tempt you onto the historic Broad Street to shop and enjoy some of the tasty food and drink on offer.

There will be stall holders selling natural, handmade decorations and gifts and warming food and drink including Churros with hot chocolate sauce and traditional Glühwein.

Exhibitors trading their wares include Oxford's much-loved ethical and fair trade shop, Indigo, the award-winning liquid deli from Scotland, Demijohn, stylish and original artwork of Oxford by Pitch 26, vintage inspired homeware, gifts and accessories from Laurie & Jules, Burrow and Hide, The Upton Cheyney Chilli Company, The Fairy Light Company and Oxford Aromatics.

Whether you are looking to consume festive drinks and food while shopping and enjoying the range of carols and bands playing, or you're looking for stocking fillers for the foodies in your life, there will be something for all taste buds, many with a European influence.

Local choirs and bands will perform throughout the 11 days and children will be able to ride on the Victorian carousel.

Nicole Rahimi, owner of Oxford Christmas Market says: "We are really excited about the market once again this year. The location is absolutely perfect, it couldn't feel any more festive. The feedback from last year's market was amazing so hopefully we can improve on that even more this year."

For more information on the market which runs until December 17 and a full list of stalls contact info@oxfordchristmas-market.co.uk

A hair-raising production

HAIRSPRAY the Musical returns to the Oxford stage next year for a week-long run.

The big, bold and beautiful show comes to the New Theatre Oxford from June 18 to 23, and tickets are on sale now.

Featuring iconic music and lyrics, this show stars ITV comedy legend Norman Pace as Wilbur Turnblad, Brenda Edwards as Motormouth Maybelle and Layton Williams as Seaweed.

While newcomer Rebecca Mendoza makes her professional debut as Tracy Turnblad.

Set in Baltimore 1962, Tracy Turnblad, is a big girl with big hair and an even bigger heart, and is on a mission to follow her dreams and dance her way onto national TV.

Tracy's audition makes her a local star and soon she is using her new-found fame to fight for equality as well as bagging local heartthrob Link Larkin along the way.

Hairspray is a musical based on the 1988 film of the same name which starred Divine and Ricki Lake.

The original stage production opened in London at the Shaftesbury Theatre in 2007 and won four Laurence Olivier Awards including Best New Musical. It has since become an international success.

Tickets are available from the New Theatre box office on George Street, by calling 0844 871 3020 or go to atgtickets.com/oxford

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Black and Blues with popular hit

By Samantha McGregor

AWARD-WINNING show The Chicago Blues Brothers is set to burst onto the New Theatre stage next month.

The show is a "high-octane, adrenaline-pumping musical mash-up" showcasing the best material from the original Blues Brothers movies.

It is jam-packed with songs by legends such as Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Ray Charles, Tina Turner and Cab Calloway – plus many other blues, soul, Motown and funk classics.

It takes to the stage for one night only on January 26.

The Blues Brothers are played by Chris Hindle as Jake and Gareth Davey as Elwood.

They are backed by a seven-piece live band and two talented backing singers.

The Chicago Blues Brothers cast pay great attention to the sound and feel of the music, all performed with the same accuracy, passion, energy and spirit of the legacy created by Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi in the hit movie The Blues Brothers.

Complete with a set designed exclusively by Spanish artist Jordi Machi, the show has been invited to perform at festivals, theatres and arenas all over the world including Switzerland, Dubai, Norway, Poland, Latvia and Thailand.

The original Blues Brothers was founded by Aykroyd and Belushi as part of a musical sketch for US show Saturday Night Live.

But it took on a life of its own and the pair released an album in 1978 called Briefcase Full of Blues, and in 1980 the movie The Blues Brothers was released.

The movie told the story of Jake Blues, a convict on parole, and his bother Elwood who take a mission from God to reform their blues band to raise money to save the Catholic orphanage where they grew up.

It became the 10th highest grossing movie of that year.

Tickets for the show can be bought from the New Theatre box office, by calling 0844 871 3020 or go to atgtickets.com/oxford

Stand up and laugh out loud at comedy club

THE New Theatre's Laugh Out Loud Comedy Club opens its doors again on Saturday with headliner American Dave Fulton.

Also taking to the stage are compere Damion Larkin and comedians Tom Lucy and Funmbi Omotayo.

Fulton has been described as an American, with a sense of humour.

The Seattle-based comedian has played clubs from San Francisco to New York, and notched up many TV credits including a cutting-edge US programme called Comedy Explorers where he was filmed floating down the Grand Canyon.

Fulton is opinionated, ironic, and sardonic and isn't afraid to pull punches in his observations, yet has a deceptively laid-back stage manner that disguises a raw aggression.

His recent television appearances include BBC 2's The Stand Up Show, Channel 5's The Comedy Store as well as BBC2's Never Mind the Buzzcocks and Steve Coogan's Saxondale.

Tom Lucy is something of a unique child prodigy. He's the youngest comedian ever to play professionally at the Comedy Store in London at just 18-years-old, and is one of the youngest comedians working professionally on the UK circuit.

Having first tried stand up at the age of 16, he now performs regularly for some of the country's top comedy clubs such as The Glee Club, and in the last six months, he has supported the likes of Jack Whitehall and Harry Hill on tour.

In 2015, at the age of 18, Lucy became the youngest ever comedian to be signed to Off the Kerb – the UK's biggest comedy agency.

Funmbi Omotayo, is a multi-award-winning comedian and firm favourite with crowds all over the UK.

Funmbi has created a huge storm on the comedy circuit with tales of his Nigerian roots and his hilarious day-to-day observations and his gently paced stories and anecdotes are delivered warmly and confidently creating massive laughs.

For tickets drop into the New Theatre in George Street, call 0844 871 3020 , or go to atgtickets.com/lol

Dave Fulton isn't afraid to pull any punches on stage

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www.chinnorrailway.co.uk

Out & About

Wrap up with delightful show

By Samantha McGregor

A NEW Coat for Christmas is a brand-new show for little ones created by The Oxford Playhouse.

Staged at the Burton Theatre, performances of the magical show, filled with fun, music and dressing-up, last just 50 minutes.

Based on Harriet Ziefert's post-war children's story, A New Coat for Anna, this play tells the story of a little girl who needs a new coat to keep her warm in the winter.

But times are hard, so she and her mother set about making one – with a little help from their friends.

A New Coat for Christmas takes the audience on a walk through the seasons as the coat slowly comes to life.

As winter turns to spring they visit the farmer and his flock of very fluffy sheep and ask for wool.

In the summer time a spinner and weaver help turn it into cloth and in the autumn the tailor makes it into a beautiful red coat with six pretty buttons.

The coat is ready just in time for the cosiest Christmas they have had for a very long time.

A New Coat for Christmas is inspired by a true tale of finding friendship in the most surprising circumstances.

Written and directed by Anna Glynn, of Flintlock Theatre, the show stars Leonie Spilsbury, whose previous appearances at Oxford Playhouse include What To Do When You Find A Dinosaur, Robin Hood and Hurry Up Father Christmas.

She appears alongside Laura Soper, who is making her professional acting debut.

This show is an Oxford Playhouse production in association with Flintlock Theatre and Reading Rep. It's the perfect treat for three to six-year-olds. It runs from today until January 7.

Tickets cost from £7 and are available from the Oxford Playhouse Ticket Office on 01865 305305 or at oxfordplayhouse.com

Take a spin around a Viennese ballroom

The new year sees the romance of the gilded ballrooms of Vienna brought to life on the Oxford stage.

The Johann Strauss Gala will take to the New Theatre stage on January 21, as part of a UK and Ireland tour.

With the Johann Strauss Dancers in glorious costumes of the period, the theatre will become the Viennese ballrooms of the 19th century, when the composer created his musical works.

The show features the gentle humour of Wine, Women and Song with its swirling flourish and brass fanfare, the sparkle of the polka and the toe-tapping, hand-clapping favourite Radetsky March to the evocative Blue Danube Waltz.

Other classics include Audition Aria from Die Fledermaus, Vienna, City of my Dreams and many more.

The performance is directed and choreographed by Alexandra Worrall. The conductor is John Rigby and will feature soprano Corinne Cowling and tenor Nicky Spence.

Tickets are available from the New Theatre box office, by calling 0844 871 3020 or go to atgtickets.com/oxford

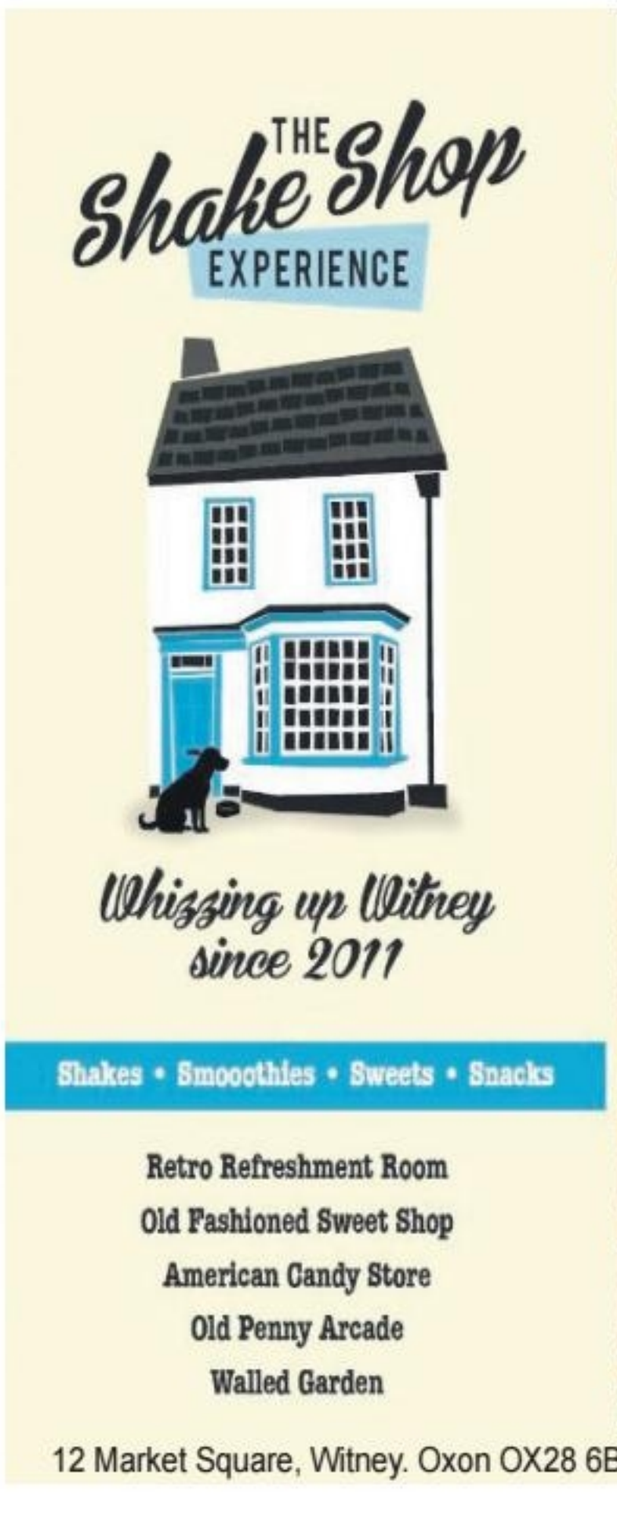
Overflowing with festive favourites

Folk quartet St Agnes Fountain will perform at Nettlebed Folk Club on Monday.

Made up of founder David Hughes, Fairport Convention's Chris Leslie and 2009's BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards Best Duo, Chris While and Julie Matthews, the band come together for one month every year for the Christmas Tour.

During each show they perform rhythmed-up carols and festive music.

For more information or tickets go to whileandmatthews.co.uk



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Nicholls

Out&About Competition

WIN tickets to the awe-inspiring Cirque du Soleil: OVO

Closing date: Friday, January 5, 2018

Cirque du Soleil returns to the iconic Royal Albert Hall from 7 January 2018 with never before seen in the uk show, OVO!

Immerse yourself in a colourful carnival of crazy crickets, amazing ants and flexible fleas, teeming with joy, amazement and mind-blowing signature Cirque du Soleil acts. Rush headlong into an ecosystem teeming with life, where insects work, eat, crawl, flutter, play, fight and love.

Crawling with fun, OVO is a non-stop riot of energy and movement featuring many of Cirque du Soleil's show-stopping performers including a stunning 14m high flying trapeze act – the biggest of its kind!

An unforgettable experience - Don't miss your chance to experience the world-famous Cirque du Soleil at such an iconic London venue.
Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AP.
Limited season 7 January – 4 March 2018.

Win a pair of tickets!

We have teamed up with Cirque du Soleil to offer our readers the chance to win a pair of tickets to see this highly sought after production at the Royal Albert Hall on Tuesday 27th February 2018 at 7.30pm.

There are 3x pairs of tickets to be won. To be in with a chance of winning answer the following question:

Q: Which animal kingdom does OVO explore? Reptiles, Mammals, Insects or Fish?

Prize tickets are Price Level 2-3 and are valid for Tuesday 27th February 2018 7.30pm performance only, strictly subject to availability. All prize tickets will be supplied as e-tickets and are non-transferable. No cash alternative is available. Travel is not included.

To enter this competition and more like it, go online to
www.oxfordshireguardian.co.uk
For full terms & conditions go to www.oxfordshireguardian.co.uk/about-us

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Telephone 01993 779 777 Email events@oxfordwitneyhotel.co.uk

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- Borromean Islands cruise with visits to Isola Bella and Isola Pescatori
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- Centovalli narrow-gauge railway excursion to Locarno, Switzerland
- Airport taxes and return transfer to your hotel

Quote: JCK170 | Visit: www.omega-holidays.com/JCK170

The advertised price is correct as of 4 September 2017 and is based upon departures from Gatwick airport on 15 April 2018.

Organised by Omega Holidays plc, ABTA V4782. ATOL Protected 6081. Single supplement applies. Subject to availability.
†We have included the current flight price within the above package price. Should the cost of flights change the package price may vary. The final price will be confirmed to you at time of booking.

To book call 01524 37500
OPENING TIMES: MON-FRI 8.30-19.00 SAT 8.30-16.00 SUN 10.00-16.00

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"I honestly believe that Colourfence is the best general purpose fencing product on the market today!"

Get ready for Autumn

Now's the perfect time to replace your garden fence once and for all. Anna Ryder Richardson - Designer and Television Presenter - takes a closer look at Colourfence, the revolutionary low-maintenance system.

It's been ten years since I regularly graced TV screens helping transform people's living spaces with MDF and stripped floorboards. Recently it's been more "celebrity muck out" than "celebrity make-over" as I took up the challenge of owning my own Wildlife Zoo in Tenby. In this time I've learnt quiet a lot about fences and having researched the various options for my own benefit I thought I would share my knowledge with a wider audience.

The latest design processes mean there is now a tremendous array of fencing products for you to choose from, constructed from a variety of materials. Each has its own attributes, and ultimately it can often come down to a matter of personal preference. For me, there was one unique system that stood out as providing the best balance between price and functionality which eradicates fencing problems for good. Or for at least 25 years. Colourfence. For quality, value, longevity, aesthetic design, this fencing system ticks all the boxes. Fencing made for the 21st century that will transform the look of your garden which is supplied and fitted by a company whose customer service is as good as the product.

In my view, Colourfence is the 'Rolls Royce' of fencing – just without the exclusive price tag. What's more, it's guaranteed to stay in place in up to 130mph winds and is virtually maintenance free.

To find out how the experts from Colourfence might help you, I suggest you call **01865 582 171** and speak to their team.

Colourfence: The ultimate garden fence?

For many Colourfence is perhaps the ultimate choice. For the last 15 years it's been widely used across the UK and has steadily gained a reputation for its quality. By using the highest specification Colorbond steel in the fence structure itself, complemented by the highest level of customer service from accredited Franchisees, Colourfence is now regarded by many as the premier fencing solution in the market. Immune to the rot and resistant to the weather that so quickly effects wooden fences, Colourfence has none of the drawbacks of wood - plenty of additional benefits and what's more it's better value!

Call **01865 582 171** for more information

Gardeners' Questions

Q Wooden fence panels just don't seem to last - is there a storm resistant alternative?

A The Colourfence system has been tested under cyclonic conditions to withstand storms with wind gusts up to 130mph. Unlike your wooden fence - once professionally installed - Colourfence really will stay up!

Q No matter what I treat my wooden fence with - nothing seems to prevent it rotting or looking shabby for very long.

A Treating your fence is a thankless and expensive task. It's also a losing battle. Wood simply want's to rot. Colourfence offers a low-maintenance alternative where by an occasional wash down will keep it looking great for up to 25 years! GUARANTEED!†

THIS WEEK'S JOB

†Terms and conditions apply - full details available on request

Head into Autumn - with COLOURFENCE

The only garden fence you will ever need!

Every gardener knows that it pays to plan ahead. If you are one of the thousands of people who watched helpless, as winter winds battered their garden, it will not be a surprise that garden fences are almost always the first casualty. Whether you have previously patched, painted or simply prayed to keep your fence going, there's no escaping the fact that timber fences will always fall victim to the weather. With Colourfence you can put your garden straight once and for all. Colourfence is scientfically tested and cyclonically rated to ensure when professionally installed, it can withstand wind gusts of up to 130mph. Once it's up – it stays up and is guaranteed to look good year after year. Safe, extra secure and hassle free – you will NEVER need to paint it, treat it or patch it. An occasional hose down will be all you need do to keep it in top condition for years to come. In fact the system is so durable that Colourfence will guarantee† their fencing to last at least 25 years. Available in a range of colours to suit any garden, with or without decorative trellis, the highly skilled installation team make short work of their dramatic transformations. Your sad old fence will be e_ ciently cleared and replaced, leaving you to get back to enjoying your rejuvenated garden. Pricing is just as straightforward and equally attractive. Starting costs are in line with inferior timber systems but with no annual treatments required, Colourfence saves you time and money each and every year. Their aim is your peace of mind. With a 25 year guarantee† Colourfence speaks for itself and promises a lifetime of hassle-free enjoyment.

For more information and to arrange a FREE no obligation site visit simply call one of their helpful team on 01865 582 171.

COLOURFENCE

the revolutionary low-maintenance system

01865 582 171

colourfence.co.uk

†Terms and conditions apply - full details available on request

In detail:

- Virtually Maintenance-free.
- Save time & money - no treating required.
- Guaranteed† not to rot, warp or peel for up to 25 years.
- Costs in line with far inferior timber systems
  Variety of colours and sizes available
- Professionally installed by accredited Franchisees

Colourfence is built to last!

NO PRESSURE PROMISE

To reassure customers that our free no obligation site survey and quotation is not a precursor to high pressure sales techniques, all Colourfence Franchisees have signed up to the Colourfence No Pressure Promise. Call or visit our website for details.

COLOUR FENCE

puzzle drome

Your weekly puzzle challenge

CROSS CODE

5	23	1	1	15	5	22	12	21	■	12	20	1
2	■	14	■	4	■	1	■	1	■	21	■	17
25	10	14	13	2	1	1	■	20	14	12	5	15
■	■	4	■	14	■	15	■	22	■	8	■	14
11	1	14	7	■	8	1	21	■	5	12	3	1
4	■	■	■	8	23	14	4	16	■	10	■	5
6	1	10	24	2	1	■	8	10	26	6	1	5
20	■	26	■	26	12	8	1	14	■	■	■	1
10	5	12	10	■	14	1	19	■	10	20	12	19
21	■	6	■	19	■	14	■	18	■	23	■	■
4	15	12	21	1	■	14	4	2	8	12	21	1
1	■	8	■	10	■	4	■	25	■	21	■	11
5	22	7	■	9	12	14	1	15	6	10	20	1

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

1 E	2	3 Z	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 R	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

MAGIC SQUARE

SPILL SALE DETAILS

Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.

Quiz Challenge

1. What is the name of the fictional Tube station which serves the residents in EastEnders?
2. The image of an eagle perched on a cactus while eating a snake is found on the national flag of which country?
3. In which South American country is Guayaquil the largest city by population, although not the capital?
4. Against which country did England fight The Hundred Years' war?
5. Which city in northern England is the birthplace of boxer Nicola Adams and novelist Barbara Taylor Bradford?
6. Ares is the Greek God of what?
7. Which R is a French word used in English for a person who tells anecdotes in a skilful and amusing way?
8. "A noble spirit embiggens the smallest man" is the motto of which fictional town in TV animation?
9. Monty Don presents TV's Gardeners' World from his own garden Longmeadow, in which English county on the Welsh border?
10. "Be afraid. Be very afraid" was a catchphrase on the poster for which 1986 film?

NONAGRAM

S	U	N
I	C	E
S	O	L

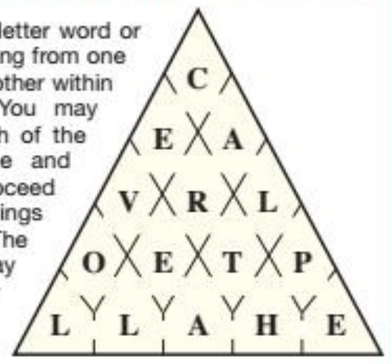
How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:
25 Good; 30 Very Good; 35 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

WORD PYRAMID

Spell out a 15-letter word or phrase by moving from one chamber to another within the pyramid. You may only enter each of the chambers once and may only proceed through openings in the walls. The first letter may appear in any chamber.

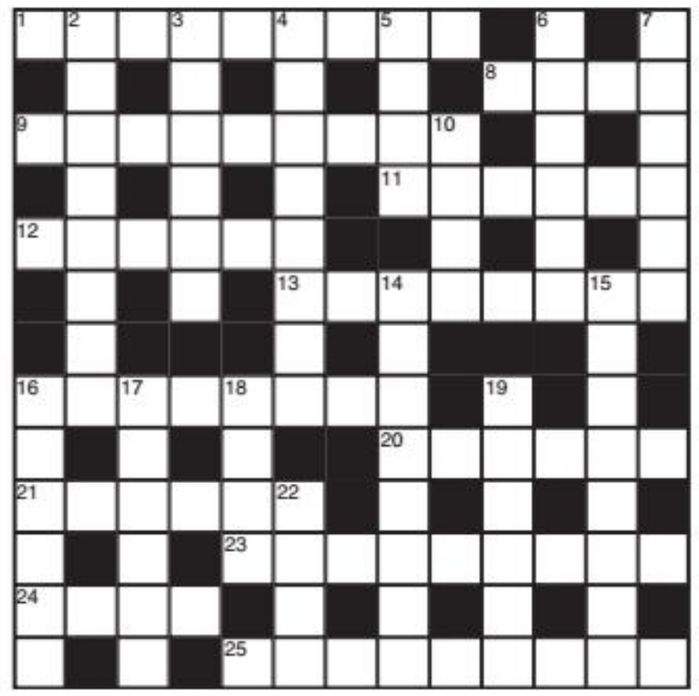


FIVE ALIVE

KN	NA	UM	ER	SL
NI	■	OP	■	UY
OE	XC	TE	AO	LN
TC	■	NT	■	GP
ES	IP	DO	CE	HS

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid – but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Deficiency during brief season in America (9)
8. Clever to snub enemy leader (4)
9. So far equal to silver American vegetable (9)
11. One who gets the measure of his customers (6)
12. Needle used for writing? (6)
13. Fighting an opponent of it (8)
16. Does one make a violent effort with sieve? (8)
20. Uninteresting journey first to come to an end (3,3)
21. Formidable person has most of the sauce (6)
23. Killing strangely roused only half a murmur first (9)
24. Cycle over a hill (4)
25. Doctor the sex offender (9)

DOWN

2. Showing indecision in arranging the satin (8)
3. Truly about a friend (6)
4. Go round after a puncture in a panic (4,4)
5. Left out a boor (4)
6. Central parts in clue distorted (6)
7. Search thoroughly for the little creature (6)
10. Airs another eastern garment (4)
14. One of the passageways of power (8)
15. Peevish cat who always looks gloomy (8)
16. Took one's seat with anger at the irony perhaps (6)
17. It is not often that this is found (6)
18. The mosque's first prayer? (4)
19. Catch medical specialist on strike (6)
22. Girl booked and badly hurt (4)

SUDOKU

Easy Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box. **Hard**

5			6	3			2	
	8	6				3	1	5
		3	2					7
					4			
				9	2	1		3
		2			3		4	
				4		7	8	1
4	7		9				3	
	5	8	1		7		6	9

					9	5	7	
				8		9		
		3			4		1	
7								
		6					4	
4		2	5		8	3		
6						1		
2			3			6	9	
9					2			

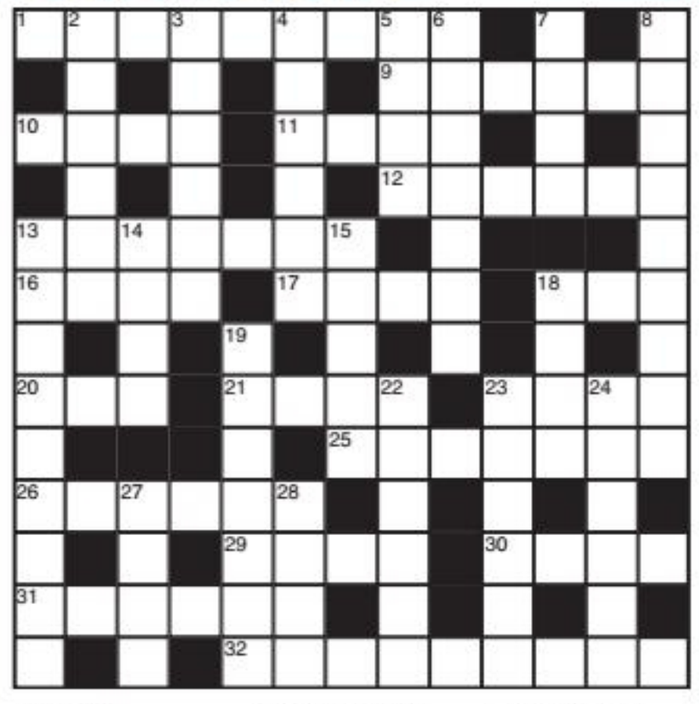
EQUALISER

6 10
8 ◯ 3 ◯ 1
3 3
7 ◯ 3 ◯ 2
2 6

Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same.

Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Suite of rooms (9)
9. Suave, refined (6)
10. Snatch (4)
11. Fourth dimension (4)
12. Pub worker (6)
13. Stapler (anag.) (7)
16. Hire (4)
17. Small loaf (4)
18. Extra run at cricket (3)
20. Farm animal (3)
21. Scottish loch (4)
23. Exactly alike (4)
25. Slipped by (7)
26. Infected with bacteria (6)
29. Small pool (4)
30. Precipitation (4)
31. Procure (6)
32. Trick, illusion (9)

DOWN

2. Conditional release (6)
3. Healthy (6)
4. Substance (6)
5. Without feeling (4)
6. Molasses (7)
7. Cultivate the land (4)
8. Went in again (2-7)
13. Exactness (9)
14. Afresh (4)
15. Awaken (5)
18. Prejudice (4)
19. Without taste (7)
22. Toboggan (6)
23. Soul (6)
24. Breed of sheep (6)
27. Trail (4)
28. Ice cream holder (4)

All puzzles on this page are supplied by Sirius Media Services. To try more of our puzzles interactively online go to **www.puzzledrome.com**

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SOLUTIONS

QUIZ CHALLENGE: 1 Walford East; 2 Mexico; 3 Ecuador; 4 France; 5 Leeds; 6 War; 7 Raconteur; 8 Springfield (The Simpsons); 9 Herefordshire; 10 The Fly.

CROSS CODE

1 E	2 U	3 Z	4 O	5 S	6 L	7 Y	8 T	9 F	10 A	11 V	12 I	13 Q
14 R	15 P	16 W	17 X	18 J	19 D	20 C	21 N	22 K	23 H	24 G	25 M	26 B

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD:

Across – 1 Shortfall; 8 Cute; 9 Asparagus; 11 Tailor; 12 Stylus; 13 Pacifist; 16 Strainer; 20 Run dry; 21 Tartar; 23 Murderous; 24 Rota; 25 Therapist.

Down – 2 Hesitant; 3 Really; 4 Flat spin; 5 Loud; 6 Nuclei; 7 Ferret; 10 Sari; 14 Corridor; 15 Sourpuss; 16 Satire; 17 Rarity; 18 Imam; 19 Entrap; 22 Ruth.

QUICK CROSSWORD:

Across – 1 Apartment; 9 Urbane; 10 Grab; 11 Time; 12 Barman; 13 Plaster; 16 Rent; 17 Roll; 18 Bye; 20 Cow; 21 Ness; 23 Same; 25 Elapsed; 26 Septic; 29 Pond; 30 Rain; 31 Obtain; 32 Deception.

Down – 2 Parole; 3 Robust; 4 Matter; 5 Numb; 6 Treacle; 7 Farm; 8 Re-entered; 13 Precision; 14 Anew; 15 House; 18 Bias; 19 Insipid; 22 Sledge; 23 Split; 24 Merino; 27 Path; 28 Cone.

WORD PYRAMID:
All over the place.

EQUALISER:
Clockwise from top left – subtract; multiply; divide; add. Total: 5.

HARD SUDOKU

1	6	4	2	3	9	5	7	8
5	2	7	1	8	6	9	3	4
8	9	3	7	5	4	2	1	6
7	5	9	6	4	2	1	8	5
3	8	6	9	2	1	7	4	5
6	3	5	4	9	7	1	8	2
2	4	8	3	1	5	6	9	7
9	7	1	8	6	2	4	5	3

EASY SUDOKU

3	5	8	1	2	7	4	6	9
4	7	1	9	8	6	5	3	2
6	2	9	3	4	5	7	8	1
7	1	2	5	6	3	9	4	8
8	6	4	7	9	2	1	5	3
9	3	5	8	1	4	2	7	6
1	4	3	2	5	8	6	9	7
2	8	6	4	7	9	3	1	5
5	9	7	6	3	1	8	2	4

MAGIC SQUARE:

dial	isle	alps	last

NONAGRAM:
call; census; cess; cession; cine; cline; clone; clonus; close; clou; clue; coil; coin; cole; coleus; cone; consul; conus; cosine; cossie; coulis; coulisse; counsel; cousin; cuisse; cuss; icon; incise; incus; incuse; locus; loesic; ounce; scion; scone; SECLUSION; sice; since; slice; slice; socle; sonic; uncle; unco; uncoil.

FIVE ALIVE:
(1) Across – Knurl; Ocean; Sides.
Down – Knots; Upend; Lungs.
(2) Across – Names; Extol; Epoch.
Down – Niece; Motto; Siyph.

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The Incredible NO-MESS Modelling Sticks For Children

For ages 3 to 12

A FANTASTIC CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEA!

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WaxiDoodles are educational, twistable, stickable, pliable, buildable, creatable, re-usable, hands-on modelling sticks that are great fun and mess-free!

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Each set contains 150 re-usable WaxiDoodles in 15 different colours, a durable model board and an activity booklet full of ideas.

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Box size approx. 30.5cm x 23cm

Each set includes 150 sticks in 15 colours

"My Children will tell you WaxiDoodles are their favourite toy ever. They are played with the whole time… the quality is incredibly high too. I can't recommend them highly enough."
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OXP3A

Send coupon to: WaxiDoodles OXP Offer
c/o THPC, PO Box 621, York House, Wetherby Road, York YO26 7NH

Order Code	Item:	Qty	Was	Now	Total
HPCWXD	1 x 'Waxidoodles' 20% OFF!		~~£14.99~~	£11.99	
HPCWXD	2 x 'Waxidoodles' SAVE £6!		~~£29.98~~	£23.98	
Standard Delivery (approx. 7 to 10 days) Please note that offer code also discounts delivery charge by £1 (regular p and p £4.95) **FREE UK delivery on orders over £40!**				£3.95	
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Grand Total					

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Card No.
Expiry Date Valid From Date Issue No. 3 Digit Security Code.
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The Happy Puzzle Company would like to permit carefully chosen third party companies to contact you with special offers from time to time. If you don't wish to receive this information, please tick here ☐

* Our 0844 numbers cost 7p per minute plus your phone company's access charge.

Offer ends 11.59pm 30th April 2018!

Saturday December 9th

BBC 1

TOP TV

6.45pm Strictly Come Dancing

MORNING

10.00am Saturday Kitchen Live
11.30am Nigella: At My Table

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Football Focus
1.00pm BBC News
1.15pm Snooker
4.30pm Final Score
5.15pm Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme
5.45pm BBC News
5.55pm Regional News and Weather

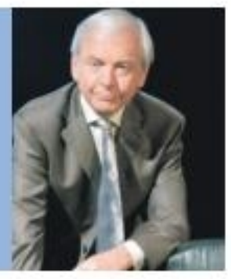
EVENING

6.00pm Pointless
6.45pm Strictly Come Dancing
8.20pm Michael Mcintyre's Big Show
9.20pm Casualty
10.10pm BBC News
10.30pm Match of the Day
11.55pm The NFL Show
12.25am Someone to Watch Over Me
2.05am Weather for the Week Ahead
2.10am BBC News
6.00am Breakfast

BBC 2

TOP TV

4.00pm Mastermind



MORNING

8.00am Deadly 60
8.30am Show Me What You're Made of: UK
9.00am Saturday Mash-Up!
11.00am Penguins on a Plane: Great Animal Moves

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well
12.30pm Tom Kerridge's Best Ever Dishes
1.00pm Demolition
2.00pm Operation Snow Tiger
3.00pm Escape to the Continent
4.00pm Mastermind
4.30pm Snooker
5.30pm John Noakes: TV Hero

EVENING

6.10pm BP Confidential
7.00pm Snooker
10.00pm QI XL
10.45pm Insert Name Here
11.15pm The Cider House Rules
1.10am Borrowed Time
2.40am This is BBC Two
6.05am Coast

ITV

TOP TV

9.25am Saturday Morning with James Martin at Christmas

MORNING

8.30am Thunderbirds are Go
9.00am Wishfart. Normal Sad
9.25am Saturday Morning with James Martin at Christmas
11.20am Gino's Italian Coastal Escape
11.45am The Hungry Sailors

AFTERNOON

12.45pm Thunderbirds are Go
1.10pm ITV News
1.20pm The X Factor
3.00pm Endeavour
5.00pm The Chase

EVENING

6.00pm Paul O'Grady: For The Love of Dogs
6.25pm ITV News London
6.35pm ITV News
6.50pm You've Been Framed!
7.15pm Ninja Warrior UK
8.20pm I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!
9.50pm Through the Keyhole
10.50pm ITV News
11.05pm Shaun of the Dead
12.50am Jackpot247
3.00am The Hungry Sailors
3.50am ITV Nightscreen

Channel 4

TOP TV

7.00pm Guy Martin's WWI Tank

MORNING

7.00am Everybody Loves Raymond
7.50am Frasier
8.45am The Big Bang Theory
9.40am The Simpsons
11.10am 12 Dates of Christmas

AFTERNOON

12.55pm Come Dine with Me
3.30pm A Place in the Sun
4.30pm Best Laid Plans
5.30pm Grand Designs

EVENING

6.30pm Channel 4 News
7.00pm Guy Martin's WWI Tank
9.00pm X-Men: Days of Future Past
11.35pm The Drop
1.35am The Last Leg
2.30am Hollyoaks Omnibus
4.40am Location, Location, Location
5.35am Kirstie's Handmade Christmas
5.55am 3rd Rock from the Sun

Channel 5

TOP TV

3.20pm Nativity 3: Dude, Where's My Donkey?!

MORNING

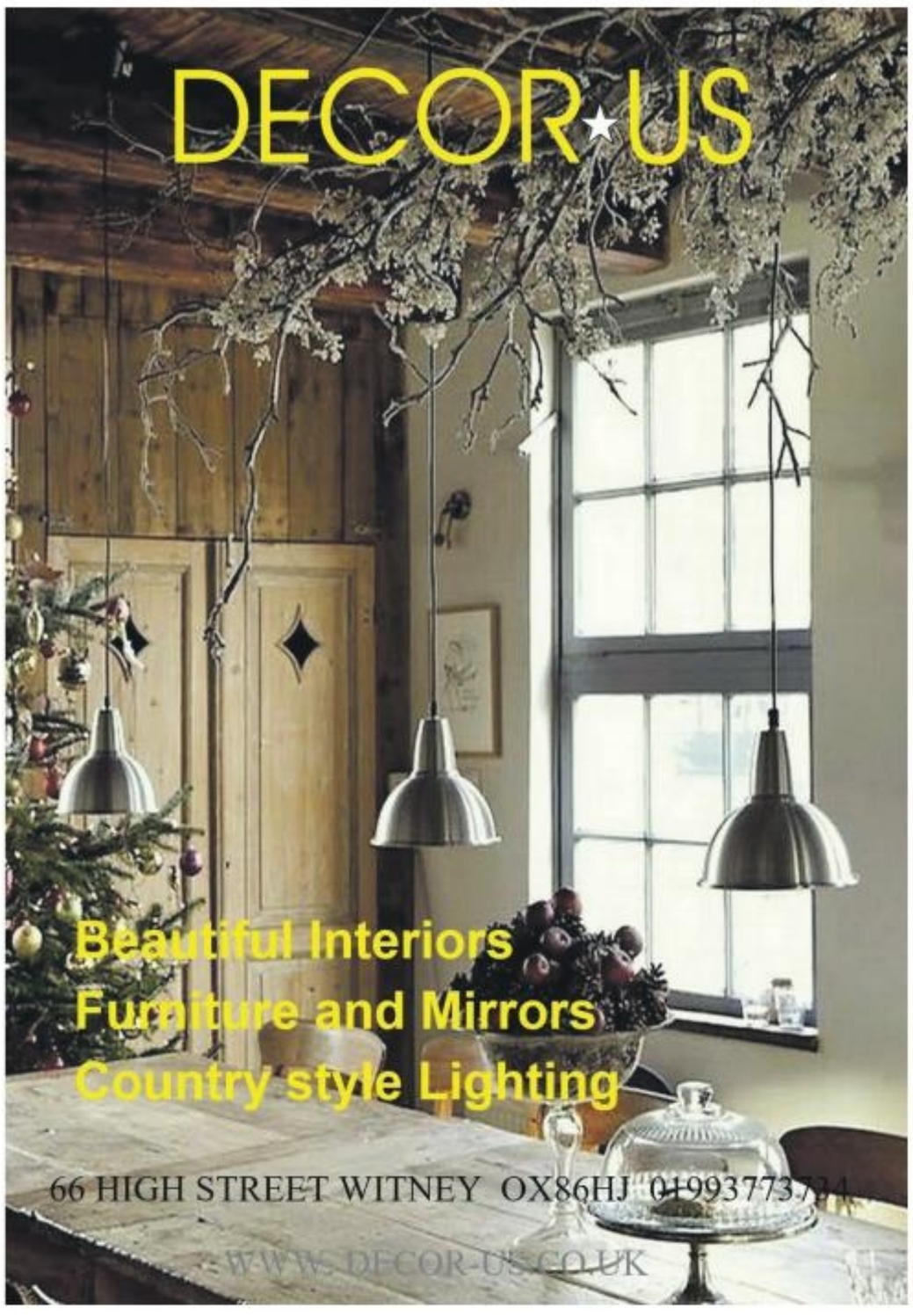
7.00am Milkshake!
10.00am Olly the Little White Van
10.10am Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
10.45am The Gadget Show
11.40am Cruising with Jane McDonald
11.50am A Perfect Christmas List

AFTERNOON

1.40pm A Nutcracker Christmas
3.20pm Nativity 3: Dude, Where's My Donkey?!
4.20pm 5 News
4.25pm Nativity 3: Dude, Where's My Donkey?!
5.35pm The Family Man

EVENING

6.35pm 5 News
6.40pm The Family Man
7.55pm 5 News Weekend
8.00pm Santa Makes You Laugh Out Loud
9.00pm Football on 5
10.25pm NCIS: New Orleans
12.15am Super Casino
3.10am The Craigslist Killer
4.40am Cruising with Jane McDonald
5.00am House Doctor
5.20am Wildlife SOS
5.45am Chinese Food in Minutes
6.00am Little Princess



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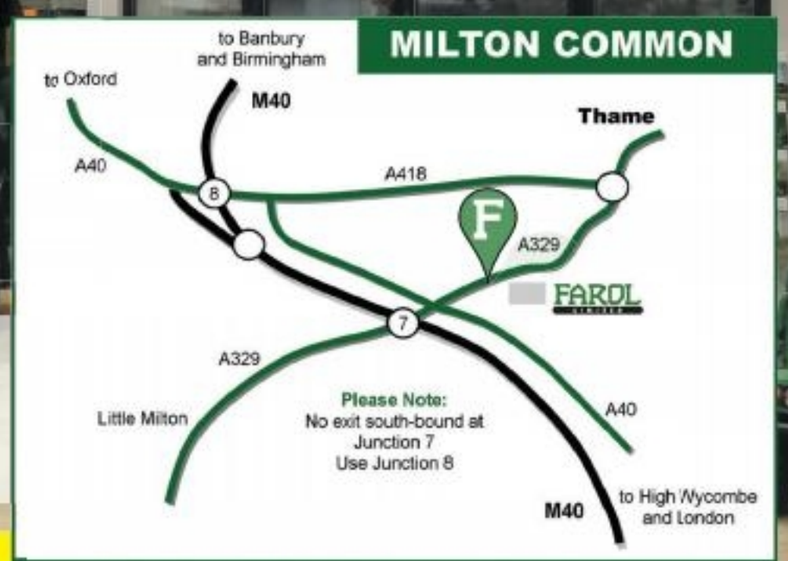

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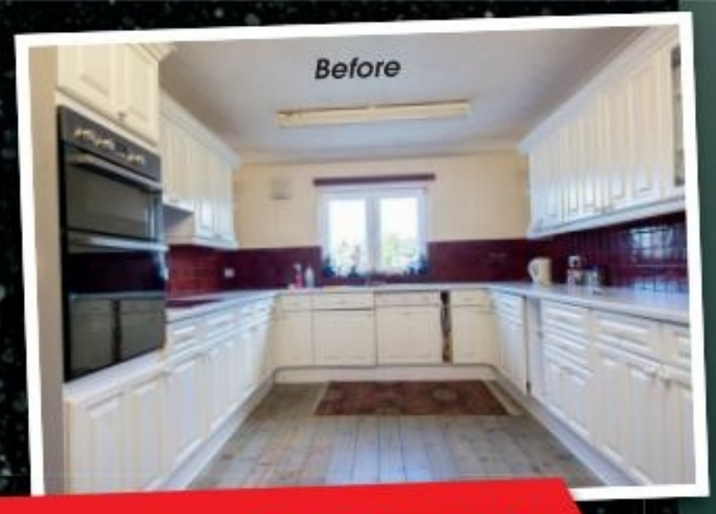

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QUARTZIZE

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CALLS ARE NOW FREE FROM MOBILES

Sunday December 10th

TOP TV

BBC 1

3.35pm Toy Story

BBC 2

5.15pm Ski Sunday

ITV

7.00pm Ninja Warrior UK

Channel 4

5.45pm The Snowman and the Snowdog

Channel 5

6.45pm Need for Speed

MORNING

BBC 1

7.35am Match of the Day
9.00am The Andrew Marr Show
10.00am Fern Britton Meets...
11.00am Sunday Politics

BBC 2

7.35am Monty Don's Secret History of the British Garden
8.35am Countryfile
9.30am Saturday Kitchen Best Bites
11.00am Food and Drink
11.30am My Life on a Plate

ITV

9.25am ITV News
9.30am Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury
9.55am The Martin Lewis Money Show
10.25am Save Money: Good Food
11.00am Tipping Point

Channel 4

7.10am Everybody Loves Raymond
8.30am Frasier
9.30am Sunday Brunch

Channel 5

7.00am Milkshake!
10.05am Football on 5
11.30am The Secret Life of Mrs Claus

AFTERNOON

BBC 1

12.15pm Bargain Hunt
1.00pm BBC News
1.15pm Escape to the Country
1.50pm Mary Berry's Country House Secrets
2.50pm Lifeline
3.00pm Songs of Praise
3.35pm Toy Story
4.50pm Blue Planet II
5.50pm BBC News

BBC 2

12.15pm MOTD2 Extra
1.00pm Snooker
5.15pm Ski Sunday

ITV

12.00pm Junior
2.05pm ITV News
2.15pm You've Been Framed!
2.45pm Midsomer Murders
4.40pm The Chase
5.35pm How to Spend it Well at Christmas with Phillip Schofield

Channel 4

12.30pm Paul Hollywood
1.00pm Evolution
3.00pm The Sorcerer's Apprentice
5.10pm The Snowman
5.45pm The Snowman and the Snowdog

Channel 5

1.10pm Journey Back to Christmas
2.55pm Trolls Holiday Special
3.25pm 5 News
3.30pm Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End
4.30pm 5 News
4.35pm Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End

EVENING

BBC 1

6.05pm Regional News and Weather
6.15pm Countryfile
7.15pm Strictly Come Dancing
8.00pm Blue Planet II
9.00pm Attenborough and the Giant Elephant
10.00pm BBC News
10.20pm Regional News and Weather
10.30pm Match of the Day 2
11.35pm The Women's Football Show
12.10am Ronny Chieng: International Student
12.40am Weather for the Week Ahead
12.45am BBC News

BBC 2

6.15pm Flog It!
7.00pm Snooker
11.00pm Employable Me
12.00am Athletics
1.05am Headhunters
2.40am Question Time
3.40am Holby City
4.40am This is BBC Two
6.00am An Island Parish: Falklands
6.30am Island Medics

ITV

6.35pm ITV News London
6.45pm ITV News
7.00pm Ninja Warrior UK
8.00pm The Chase Celebrity Special
9.00pm I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!
10.35pm ITV News
10.50pm Diamond Geezers and Gold Dealers
11.50pm The Detectives
12.40am Jackpot247
3.00am Motorsport UK
3.50am ITV Nightscreen
5.05am The Jeremy Kyle Show

Channel 4

6.10pm Channel 4 News
6.30pm Britain's Wildest Weather 2017
8.00pm Coastal Railways with Julie Walters
9.00pm The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
11.30pm Unbroken
1.55am Departure
3.45am Gillette World Sport
4.15am KOTV Boxing Weekly
4.40am Grand Designs
5.35am Countdown
6.20am 3rd Rock from the Sun

Channel 5

6.45pm Need for Speed
9.00pm Chappie
10.00pm 5 News
10.05pm Chappie
11.20pm Resident Evil: Afterlife
1.05am Super Casino
3.10am Along Came Polly
4.40am Chinese Food in Minutes
4.55am House Doctor
5.20am Wildlife SOS
5.45am Chinese Food in Minutes
6.00am Puffin Rock
6.10am Poppy Cat
6.20am Simon

Reader travel

HOTEL & TICKET PACKAGES

DIANA: HER FASHION STORY
AT KENSINGTON PALACE

Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays, March-December 2017

See this exhibition charting the fashion evolution of the late Diana, Princess of Wales, from the frills and pie-crust collars of her early days in the public eye to the elegant, sophisticated signature style of the nineties.

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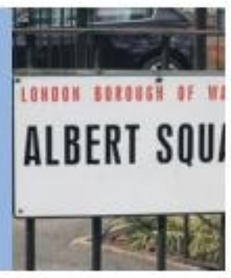
Monday Decemeber 11th

BBC 1

8.00pm EastEnders



TOP TV

MORNING

9.15am Island Medics
10.00am Homes Under the Hammer
11.00am Street Auction
11.45am Fake Britain

AFTERNOON

12.15pm Bargain Hunt
1.00pm BBC News at One
1.30pm Regional News and Weather
1.45pm Doctors
2.15pm Armchair Detectives
3.00pm Escape to the Country
3.45pm The Hairy Bikers Home for Christmas
4.30pm Money for Nothing
5.15pm Pointless

EVENING

6.00pm BBC News at Six
6.30pm Regional News and Weather
7.00pm The One Show
7.30pm Panorama
8.00pm EastEnders
8.30pm Would I Lie to You?
9.00pm The Real Marigold on Tour
10.00pm BBC News at Ten
10.30pm Regional News and Weather
10.45pm Have I Got a Bit More News for You
11.30pm Michael Mcintyre's Big Show
12.30am The Graham Norton Show
1.20am Weather for the Week Ahead

BBC 2

6.00pm Celebrity Eggheads

7.15am The Hairy Bikers Home for Christmas
8.00am Mary Berry's Country House Secrets
9.00am Victoria Derbyshire
11.00am BBC Newsroom Live

12.00pm The Daily Politics
1.00pm Athletics
2.05pm Terry and Mason's Great Food Trip
2.35pm Home Away From Home
3.20pm 32 Brinkburn Street
4.05pm The Fifteen Billion Pound Railway
5.05pm The Blue Planet

6.00pm Celebrity Eggheads
6.30pm Strictly - It Takes Two
7.00pm Celebrity Antiques Road Trip
8.00pm Nigella's Christmas Table
9.00pm Employable Me
10.00pm Insert Name Here
10.30pm Newsnight
11.15pm Blitz
12.15am Blitz
1.15am Countryfile
2.10am Blue Planet II
3.10am Holby City
4.10am This is BBC Two
6.00am Flog it! Trade Secrets

ITV

8.30pm Coronation Street

8.30am Lorraine
9.25am The Jeremy Kyle Show
10.30am This Morning

12.30pm Loose Women
1.30pm ITV Lunchtime News
1.55pm ITV News London
2.00pm Judge Rinder
3.00pm Dickinson's Real Deal
4.00pm Tipping Point
5.00pm The Chase

6.00pm ITV News London
6.30pm ITV Evening News
7.00pm Emmerdale
7.30pm Coronation Street
8.00pm The Martin Lewis Money Show
8.30pm Coronation Street
9.00pm Bancroft
10.00pm ITV News at Ten and Weather
10.30pm ITV News London
10.40pm White Right: Meeting the Enemy - Exposure
11.50pm Killer Women with Piers Morgan
12.40am Jackpot247
3.00am The Jeremy Kyle Show

Channel 4

12.25pm The Dog Who Saved Christmas

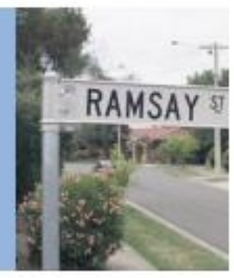
7.10am 3rd Rock from the Sun
7.35am Everybody Loves Raymond
9.00am Frasier
10.05am Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA
11.00am Jamie's Ultimate Christmas

12.00pm Channel 4 News
12.05pm Kirstie's Handmade Christmas
12.25pm The Dog Who Saved Christmas
2.10pm Countdown
3.00pm Lost and Found
4.00pm A Place in the Sun
5.00pm Kirstie's Handmade Christmas

6.00pm The Simpsons
6.30pm Hollyoaks
7.00pm Channel 4 News
8.00pm Paul Hollywood
8.30pm Supershoppers
9.00pm 999: What's Your Emergency?
10.00pm First Dates
11.05pm Don't Tell the Bride
12.05am One Born Every Minute
1.05am The Rewrite
2.55am Can We Live with Robots?
3.50am Phil Spencer: Secret Agent
4.45am Kirstie's Vintage Gems
5.05am Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free

Channel 5

6.00pm Neighbours



7.00am Milkshake!
9.05am Mofy
9.15am The Wright Stuff
11.45am 5 News Lunchtime
11.55am The Christmas Gift

1.30pm Rooftop Christmas Tree
3.15pm A Rose at Christmas
5.00pm 5 News at 5
5.35pm The Yorkshire Vet: Winter on the Moors

6.30pm 5 News Tonight
7.00pm Weather Terror
8.00pm Police Interceptors
9.00pm Concorde
11.00pm The KKK: Behind the Mask
12.00am Traffic Cops at Christmas
1.00am Super Casino
3.10am GPs: Behind Closed Doors
4.00am My Mum's Hotter Than Me!
4.45am House Doctor
5.10am The Great Artists
5.35am Wildlife SOS
6.00am Puffin Rock
6.10am Poppy Cat

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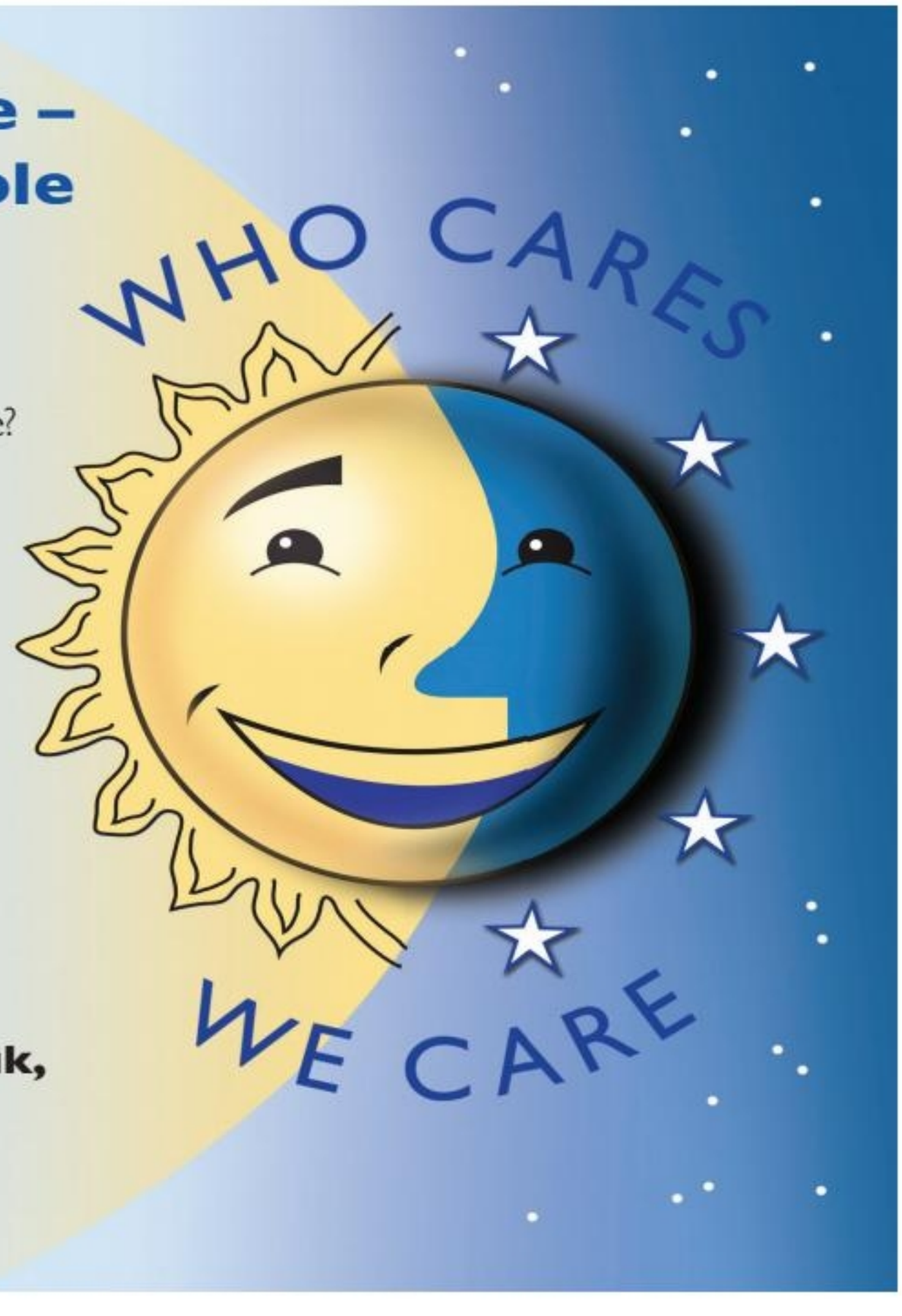

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Welcome to Bicester Caravan and Leisure

Established over thirteen years ago we have been going from strength to strength retailing touring vans built by the UK's finest manufacturers.

With a forecourt offering a selection of over 100 new season and pre-owned caravans we have something for everyone.

20% off all awnings and furniture purchased during our Blue Cross Sale.

Never has there been a better time to enjoy ownership of a touring van, however if you're considering a new season 2018 don't hang around too long as some layouts are already seeing limited availability.

With new 5 year PCP deals and 10 year traditional Hire Purchase plans, affordability has never been so flexible.

Our "Blue Cross Sale" has started NOW with a genuine £1000 saving across ALL caravans that we have displayed on the forecourt, new season and pre-owned.

All pre-owned touring vans sold come with a comprehensive warranty and pre delivery inspection.

To compliment the customer experience we have just opened a further two internal servicing bays, with NCC and AWS approval for warranty, body shop and servicing.

We have enhanced our storage area providing somewhere to store any caravan brought from us, this makes owning a caravan even more convinent for ease of use servicing etc and at very reasonable prices.

10% off pre-winter checks and caravan valeting during our Blue Cross Sale.

The leisure, parts and accessory shop in undergoing an expansion, offering some great season sales on awnings and furniture. Come and view the latest air awnings by Kampa, Vango and Isabella.

Further enhancements with new customer toilets, sales offices and the re-launch of the Peacock Café. The peacock Café is open seven days a week offering outstanding home-made cakes, cream teas and a tasty menu, well worth a visit.

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Why Do People Caravan?

People start to caravan for lots of different reasons, some people hear from friends who caravan about the variety of types of holidays that they enjoy, beach holidays (home and abroad), forest holidays, attending events balloon festivals, dog shows, country shows, classic car events, xmas markets. People will even venture off to the Cairngorms' up to (and beyond) their boots in snow!

And of course people will use their caravan as a support vehicle (accommodation, refuelling and rest) for activities like running marathons, triathlons, hill walking, skiing, windsurfing even hovercraft racing. Some Caravaners are in the National Trust enjoying our heritage, our great houses and parks, the picturesque and even the simple things like a traditional cream tea.

The great thing is you can get out there to do the things you enjoy.

With a caravan it is easier to enjoy the fresh air and the beauty of the great outdoors, you will have a better appetite with your favourite foods and drinks tasting even better, not to mention the new ones you will try, whether cooking yourself which many people love to or finding fabulous eateries out and about.

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New Citroen C3 Aircross Compact SUV Flair S&S PureTech 110

Nippy, sylish and compact – a little corker

By **Tony Yates**

I'M going to start by saying I like the design of the C3 Aircross. And the reason for me coming to this easy conclusion is simple - I personally like a decent compact SUV that can do all of the things a family man like me wants. Such as the school run, those weekly trips to the shops, or the odd weekend away. I also like a vehicle that's able to go where others would normally fail. Of course the beefy ride height and flared arches can be a little off-putting for some - but believe me, this really is a little corker.

Worth taking a look at with some interesting little additons

Power & efficiency

The C3 I had on test was powered by a 3 cylinder 1199cc - 5-speed turbocharged petrol engine that has 110HP and a very respectable top speed of 115mph, plus a 0-62 time of 11.3 seconds - which in my book is not bad for a 3 cylinder. Fuel consumption is also very good with a combined figure of 56.5 mpg.

On the road

It's a little soft, but into the corners, it feels very well balanced. A big plus for the C3 is that it has a decent amount of torque – in fact, 205Nm of it - which allows it to pull very well from pretty much any gear – which surprisingly, made the C3 a joy to drive no matter what the road conditions were doing. The brakes also felt good and firm. As for the suspension, it actually absorbs England's bumpy roads really well – but as I said, the ride was a little soft.

This is where it starts to get interesting. My test car was fitted with 'Grip Control Technology' something I knew little about, until now. Basically what it does is offer an enhanced traction ability on all types of terrain - be that sand, snow, or slippery road conditions. So how does it work? Well, I'm glad you asked that. The system works with the vehicle's ESP system to maintain the best possible traction from both front wheels. It does this with the help of five selectable operating modes which can be chosen by the driver from a dedicated control button mounted on the centre console.

Design & technology

On the inside, the interior is not bad – but I don't like how Citroen have mixed up the interior colours. Although, on a positive note – it does have easy to read dials and all the controls are in the right place and well set out. There is, however, a small problem. Some of the interior plastics feel a little 'scratchy' and I would have liked a smoother feel to them. I know you have to spend less to keep the price down for the consumer – but sometimes it's worth going that little bit further if it means you get something that feels a little bit more upmarket.

Standard equipment is good such as, ABS/EBD/EBA, hill start assist, driver & front passenger lateral & curtain airbags, iPod/MP3 connection, automatic air conditioning, six speakers, steering wheel-mounted audio control and split/folding rear bench seat.

You also get a brilliant Media Sound System which includes satellite navigation, a seven-inch colour touch-screen display, DAB radio tuner and Bluetooth audio with USB connectivity.

To sum up

I'm going to give the C3 Aircross four stars in this test, not only because I like its looks, but also because I believe it's worth taking a look at if you are in the market for a compact SUV.

Price: £18,000 (from) OTR MRRP (Cost of test car inc extras: £20,400)

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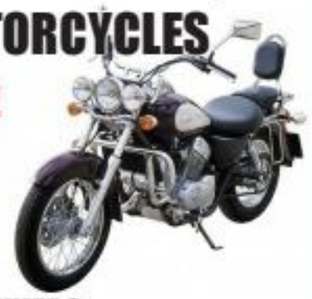

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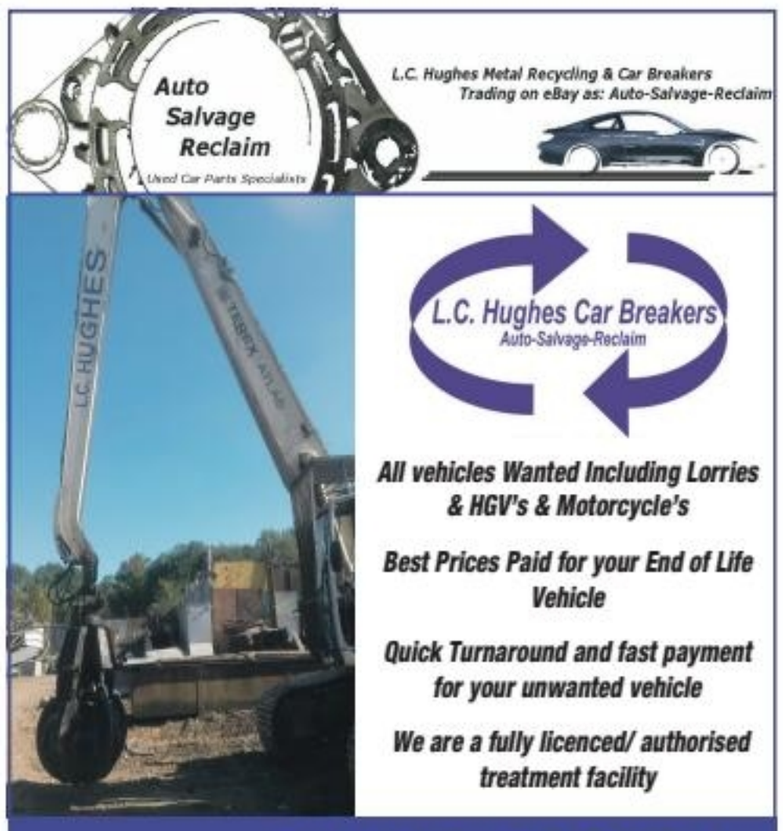
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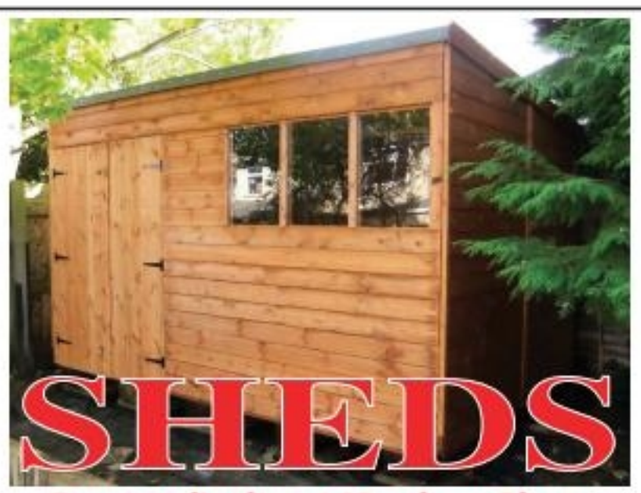

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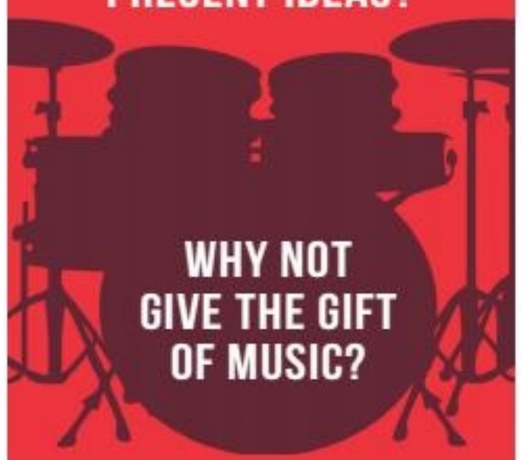

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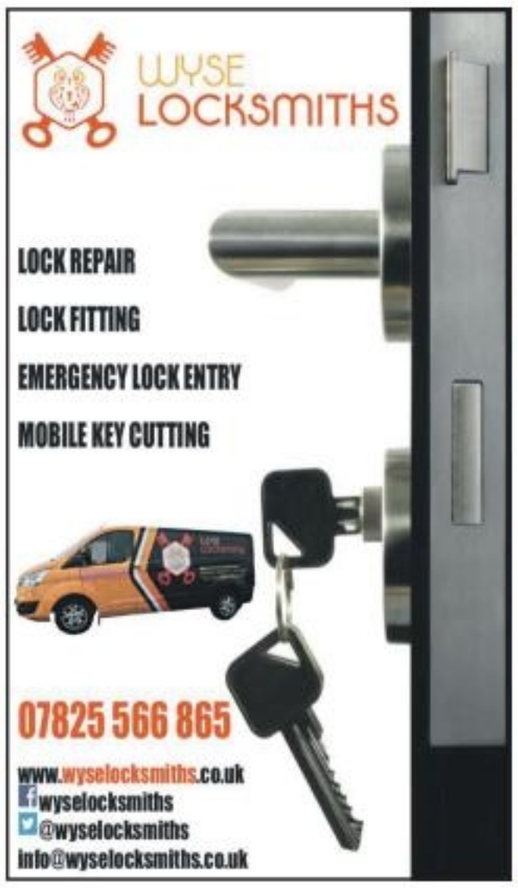

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Can golfers do the double at awards?

Nominations for county sports awards

By George Welch

EDDIE Pepperell's blistering form on the European Tour has earned the Abingdon golfer a nomination for the 2017 Oxfordshire Sports Awards.

The 26-year-old recorded seven top-ten finishes in eight events in September and October to finish 42nd in the Race to Dubai and win him a slot on the sportsman of the year shortlist for the first time.

But the Frilford Heath member faces strong competition from footballer Luke Southwood, an England Under-20 and Reading goalkeeper who won the World Cup.

Also in the running is rugby league star Josh Griffin, who helped Hull FC beat Wigan Warriors in the Challenge Cup final at Wembley.

Another golfer is up for the sportswoman of the year, as Cara Gainer competes with Gemma Bridge (athletics) and Kirtsty Miller (Taekwondo) for the top female honour.

Gainer won the English Women's Amateur Matchplay Championship and the Oxfordshire County Championship.

In her way stands national race walking champion Bridge and Taekwondo star Miller, who captained England in the European Championships, winning four medals, before claiming individual silver in the World Championships in North Korea.

The awards provide the opportunity to showcase the best that Oxfordshire has had to offer in sport and physical activity over the previous year.

The full list of nominations can be seen right.

The winners will be announced at an awards night at Oxford's Kassam Stadium on Friday, January 19.

Tickets, priced at £42.95 for adults and £29.95 for juniors, are now on sale at oxspa.co.uk/osa.

2017 OXFORDSHIRE SPORTS AWARDS CONTENDERS

SPORTSMAN OF YEAR
Josh Griffin (rugby league)
Eddie Pepperell (golf)
Luke Southwood (football)

SPORTSWOMAN OF YEAR
Gemma Bridge (athletics)
Cara Gainer (golf)
Kirsty Miller (Taekwondo)

CLUB OF YEAR
Abingdon Gymnastics
Banbury Blues Netball
Radley Athletics

TEAM OF YEAR
Aston Rowant 1st XI (cricket)
Oxfordshire 1st XV (rugby union)
Oxford Brookes University men's 1st VIII (rowing)

COACH OF YEAR
Paul Hogben (hockey)
Siobhan Tierney (judo)
Katie Wales (football)

DISABILITY AWARD
Jack Cummings (swimming)
Dreaming Spires Ten Pin Bowling
Molly Ripley (football)

JUNIOR SPORTSMAN OF YEAR
Ben Goodall (gymnastics)
William Jeffrey (cycle speedway)
Ethan Rose (badminton)

JUNIOR SPORTSWOMAN OF YEAR
Enya Dale (canoeing)
Rowena Hearn (hockey)
Elizabeth Ireland (Nordic skiing)

JUNIOR TEAM OF YEAR
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Oxford Academy Under 14 (football)
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Cherwell
King Alfred's Academy

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Joanna Kelly (netball)
Gordon Taylor (cricket)

YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF YEAR
Oliver Cartwright (squash)
Bea Curtis (football)
Lois MacDonald (netball)

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Promising start to E season for Virgin driver

Formula E

ALEX Lynn made a point-scoring start to his Formula E career by collecting six points in the first two races at the Hong Kong E-Prix.

The Oxford-based racer, recruited by DS Virgin Racing as a full-time driver in the close season, finished race one on Saturday in eighth place before slipping a position in the following day's race.

It was a dramatic beginning to his first full season in the all-electric classification, with the 24-year-old nearly crashing in race one and using too much power in race two to fall five places late on.

Lynn, who made his debut as a reserve driver last season in New York, said: "It's been a very encouraging weekend for DS Virgin Racing and myself. I came away with points in both races, although it could have been so much more.

"We've come away in a strong position and a lot of respect has to go to the team for their hard work behind the scenes."

Alex Lynn tackles a tight corner in Hong Kong Picture: *DS Virgin Racing*

It nearly went wrong for Lynn on the first lap of the first race as he narrowly avoided a pile-up at the chicane and managed to squeeze through an incredibly narrow gap.

He then over cooked it in the second race as he mismanaged his power, sacrificing fifth place for 10th.

However, winner Daniel Abt was excluded for a technical infringement so Lynn was lifted into ninth.

Team-mate Sam Bird finished first and fifth as Virgin shot up to second after the first two races.

The next race is in Marrakesh, Morocco on January 13.

Daytona race plan for Stroll

WILLIAMS driver Lance Stroll will line up in January's Daytona 24-hour race in a car backed by Hong Kong martial arts film star Jackie Chan.

The teenager – no longer technically a rookie at Grove-based Williams – said he is taking part largely for fun.

He will share the wheel in the Chan team's Oreca 07 car with friends Swede Felix Rosenqvist, Dutch driver Robin Frijns and Spain's Daniel Juncadella.

Stroll said: "We are going to Daytona to enjoy, compete and of course try and win. I always want to be the best and most competitive I can be. I'll be out there with some of my buddies in the same car and it is going to be a pleasure to do this race again as I just love to race.

"We are the four young guns so it will be great fun I'm sure because we go way back together."

The Canadian finished 12th in the drivers' championship in his first Formula 1 season.

The race will take place over the weekend of January 27 and 28 and the traditional 'Roar Before the 24' test in Florida will be held over January 5 to 7.

Stars continue to outshine rivals

Ice hockey

FOUR different players found the back of the net as Oxford City Stars extended their imperious winning run to 10 matches with a 4-0 win at Chelmsford Chieftains.

Matt Lawday, Josh Oliver, Andy Cox and Dominic Hopkins all struck on Sunday as the runaway leaders consolidated their position at the halfway point of the NIHL South 2 (Wilkinson) division.

For the first 20 minutes of action, the Oxford travelling support had a poor view due to the puck spending a lot of time in the offensive zone at the other end of the rink.

The Stars made their dominance count on eight minutes when Lawday, with help from Josh Florey and Joe Edwards, hit the puck beyond Chelmsford netminder Sonny Phillips.

The Chieftains were able to keep the puck in Oxford's defensive zone more in the second period than in the first. That didn't stop the in-form Oxford side, who netted twice in little over 60 second-period seconds.

Oliver and Cox got the goals for a comfortable three-goal cushion while, at the other end, Milan Ronai made multiple solid saves to keep the Chelmsford goal tally at zero.

Kenny Redmond's side refused to get complacent and, with little under nine minutes remaining of the game, Hopkins netted the fourth and final Stars goal of the evening with a well-placed banger from the blue line.

Stars have a week off before welcoming winless Lee Valley Lions (14th) to Oxpens Road on December 17.

Dominic Hopkins found the target in a 4-0 away win at Chelmsford Chieftains

Sport

Battle of the Blues at Twickenham

By George Welch

Varsity rugby

PUMPED up and raring to go, Oxford University is ready to do battle with arch rivals Cambridge in today's annual Varsity rugby matches.

The teams will fight for glory at Twickenham, with the 31st women's match kicking off at 11.30am and the men's 136th contest at 3pm.

Squads were announced last month and Oxford men's skipper Conor Kearns is hoping to lead his side back to winning ways after a record run of six successive victories before last year's 23-18 defeat.

The Irishman, one of six former Blues in the starting XV, has been able to include Canadian international Dan Moor at centre.

Kearns has, however, resisted the temptation to partner Moor with current Newcastle Falcons centre Dom Waldouck.

Instead, he has given the former Heineken Cup winner with Wasps and England Saxons player a place on the replacements bench after only playing once in the build-up to the big game due to injury.

Oxford women's skipper Sophie Behan is hoping to sign-off her Varsity career with another win.

Behan was one of many Dark Blue heroines last year when Oxford hit-back from the humiliation of a 52-0 defeat on their Twickenham debut 12 months earlier to stun Cambridge with a 3-0 victory, thanks to a single penalty from outside half Catherine Wilcock.

"To win last year was incredible, but it was made all the better by the fact that a year earlier we had stood on the same pitch at the end of the game having conceded eight tries and been beaten 52-0," said Behan, who will lead the side from No 8.

Their defensive performance that day almost had their coach, the 2014 England World Cup winning coach Gary Street, in tears, but this time round he is hoping to show the other side of his side's game.

"The effort that the players put in last year was unbelievable and I was so pleased for them. It really was an extraordinary defensive effort and I have to admit I did get a bit emotional," said Street.

"But I hope people can see more of what we can do in attack this year."

The men's fixture will be shown on BBC 2.

Conor Kearns & Charlie Amesbury with The Rhino Trophy and Sophie Behan & Lara Gibson with The Rhino Trophy. Pictures: *Matthew Impey/Wired Photos*

Champions whipped by Wheatley in shield defeat

Rugby Union

REIGNING champions Oxford University Whippets were knocked out of the Oxfordshire Shield with a 19-5 defeat at Wheatley.

Wheatley started the first round tie strongly, as they had in the league the week before, and took the lead through an early Aaron Laman penalty kick.

James Butler was then pushed over from a scrum, with Laman converting, as Wheatley made it 10-0.

The hosts continued to apply the pressure in the wet conditions and another Laman penalty extended the lead to 13 points.

The ferocity of the game left several players from both sides in need of treatment before the Whippets replied before the break when Russell Reid crossed for an unconverted try.

However, there was still time for a third Laman penalty kick to clear the posts for a 16-5 half time lead.

The fly half kicked the only points of the second half as Wheatley secured their place in the next round with the 19-5 win.

Elsewhere, there were wins for Littlemore, Alchester and Blue Boar.

Littlemore reached the semi-finals with a 33-12 home win against Abingdon, while a late penalty saw Alchester beat Harwell 13-10.

Blue Boar were handed a walkover by Faringdon.

The semi finals will take place on the weekend of January 6/7.

Wheatley and Oxford University Whippets contest a scrum during their Oxfordshire Shield tie on Saturday. Picture: *Simon Chadbone*

Abingdon score nine in two to extend impressive run

Hellenic round-up

HIGH scoring Abingdon United extended their unbeaten run to five games with two impressive victories at the weekend.

United ran riot over Royal Wootton Bassett at the Northcourt in a 6-1 victory on Saturday before winning 3-0 at Highmoor Ibis on Monday.

Of the nine goals, Abingdon had eight different goalscorers.

Callum Harvey (7 minutes), John Dennis (32) and Tom Butler (44) scored half the goals in the first half against Bassett. Joe Green (49), Ryan Barney (78) and Graham Edney (88) added the other goals in the second half in what was Abingdon's biggest win of the season so far.

Aaron Anaximenes netted a consolation for Bassett in added time, but his team had been knocked for six.

And the goals kept on flowing two days later when United dismantled Highmoor 3-0.

Butler (44), Jayce Olivero (50) and Kyle Moss (64) did the damage in Reading.

Wantage Town also stretched their unbeaten run to five games with a 4-1 home win against an improving Oxford City Nomads side on Friday.

A Mark Flanagan (19) strike gave the Freds a 1-0 lead at half time before Jack Powell made it two on 59 minutes.

Nomads tried to make a game of it and immediately reduced the areas through a Jodi Mulvany strike.

But Jim Glover (77) and Jack Dunmall (82) made sure of the points in the last 15 minutes.

Wantage (4th) travel to Brackley Town Saints (8th) on Saturday.

Nomads (15th) and Abingdon (13th) are without league fixtures until December 23.

Kiddy comprehensively beaten to end winning streak

Evo Stik round-up

KIDLINGTON missed the chance to move within a point of the Evo-Stik South West play-offs after being hammered 6-1 at Salisbury.

Tuesday night's thrashing brought an abrupt end to Kiddy's 12-match unbeaten run.

The Greens trailed their hosts, who they could have leapfrogged them with a win, 2-0 after 16 minutes and were four down at half time.

Chris Janes pulled one back for the Yarnton Road side after the interval before Salisbury added a fifth on 73 minutes.

Kidlington's Elliot Osbourne-Ricketts was dismissed in the final 10 minutes and Salisbury completed the rout in stoppage time.

The battering followed a 2-0 win over bottom club Bishops Cleeve on Saturday.

Julian McCalmon's side had to wait until the 69th minute to break the deadlock though as Lance Williams and a Lewis Coyle penalty grabbed the goals.

Elsewhere, Didcot Town extended their unbeaten run to four games with a 4-0 win at home to Slimbridge on Saturday.

Felipe Barcelos, Marlon Agyakwa, Seth Humphries and Oli Thomas bagged the goals for the Railwaymen.

North Leigh continue to edge towards the top half of the table as they collected four points on the road.

Saturday's 1-1 draw at Cinderford was followed up with a 1-0 win over Paulton Rovers on Tuesday.

Michael Hopkins scored from the spot against Cinderford and an own goal secured all three points three days later.

In the East division Lynton Goss scored both goals, including an injury time winner, to give Thame United a 2-1 victory at Egham Town on Saturday.

Oli Thomas Celebrates scoring Didcot's fourth. Picture: *Roger Neal*

Emirates FA Cup first round
Saturday 2 December
Notts County 3-2 **Oxford City**

Checkatrade Trophy second round
Tuesday 5 December
Gillingham 1-2 **Oxford United**

Vanarama National League South
Tuesday 5 December
Oxford City 3-1 Truro City

Evo-Stik South Premier
Saturday 2 December
St Ives Town 2-2 **Banbury United**
Tuesday 5 December
Merthyr Town 1-3 **Banbury United**

Evo-Stik South East
Saturday 2 December
Egham Town 1-2 **Thame United**

Evo-Stik South West
Saturday 2 December
Cinderford 1-1 **North Leigh**
Didcot Town 4-0 Slimbridge
Kidlington 2-0 Bishops Cleeve
Tuesday 5 December
Paulton Rovers 0-1 **North Leigh**
Salisbury 6-1 **Kidlington**

Uhlsport Hellenic League Premier Division
Friday 1 December
Wantage Town 4-1 **Oxford City Nomads**
Saturday 2 December
Abingdon United 6-1 Royal Wootton Bassett
Monday 4 December
Highmoor Ibis 0-3 **Abingdon United**

Puritans end winless spell

Banbury United

BANBURY United got back to winning ways with a 3-1 win at out-of-form Merthyr Town on Tuesday.

First half goals from Conor McDonagh and Luke Carnell and a Leam Howards strike four minutes from time brought United's seven match winless streak to an end.

The Welsh hosts pulled a goal back on 82 minutes through Ryan Prosser – and the Martyrs had a goal disallowed for offside 60 seconds later.

But Howards finished off a fine Banbury counter attack moments later as Merthyr, now winless in six, threw bodies forward.

The win came after a run of four consecutive league draws, including a 2-2 tie at lowly St Ives Town on Saturday.

A McDonagh strike two minutes from time earned Banbury the point as they came from 2-0 down to snatch a point.

United fell behind within four minutes after goalie Jack Harding slipped when clearing the ball. Hurt and unable to get up, Rogan McGeorge fired the ball home from 30 yards into an empty net.

Harding carried on but was picking the ball out the net again on 25 minutes when Ollie Snaith headed home.

Jack Self fired a rebound into the net from six yards just before half time to get one back.

Banbury pushed in the second half and the point was rescued when McDonagh found the back of the net.

United (9th) welcome Royston Town (13th) on Saturday before playing away at Redditch United (10th) on Tuesday.

U's stay on course for a third Wembley visit

By George Welch

Gillingham 1

Mark Bryne 9 (p)

Oxford United 2

Jack Payne 31, Alex Mowatt 90+2

Attendance: 1,224 (62 away)

Alex Mowatt scores the winning goal in extra time to put United through to the third round. Picture: *Steve Daniels*

ALEX Mowatt's late 20-yard strike fired Oxford United into round three of the Checkatrade Trophy in a closely contested 2-1 win at Gillingham on Tuesday.

United progressed following an entertaining tie at Priestfield – but they did it the hard way.

Having fallen behind to an early Mark Byrne penalty, the U's had to hit back through Jack Payne before Mowatt rifled them into the next round in the 92nd minute.

And the men in yellow rode their luck as Gills striker Josh Parker saw an effort crack against the underside of the bar and bounce away, only for the officials to incorrectly rule that the ball had not fully crossed the line.

But how United ground out a result was a source of optimism for U's manager Pep Clotet.

"The fact we went through in the cup like that is a massive boost for the players and credit to them because they did the job brilliantly," the Spaniard said.

"We prepared a game plan but Gillingham put a lot of intensity into their pressing. That made it uncomfortable for us in the beginning but afterwards we played to our strengths. We managed to beat Gillingham at pressing then they only had the counter attack against us in the second half.

"We attacked a bit more smartly in the second half and that paid off with the result."

Mowatt's strike, his second of his loan stint from Barnsley, means Oxford are three wins from a third Wembley appearance in as many years.

His goal was a moment of quality, something recognised by his boss.

Clotet said of his match winner: "When he gets the ball near the box and he gets a clear chance to shoot he is a very good player who shows a lot of quality. I'm very happy for him."

The draw for the round of 16 will take place live on talkSPORT at 12.30pm tomorrow (Friday).

Fixtures are scheduled to take place week commencing January 8.

Oxford host Doncaster Rovers at the Kassam on Saturday.

Young keeper nets a deal

Max Harris signs his Oxford United deal alongside club secretary Mick Brown. Picture: *OUFC*

OXFORD United have plucked promising goalkeeper Max Harris from non-league.

The 18-year-old stopper signed for the U's from Evo-Stik Southern Premier outfit Hereford on a two-year scholarship.

Harris, who came up through the Hereford youth system, spent a week training with Aston Villa in August and last year represented both England Colleges and England Schools.

Harris excelled while on loan with Pegasus Juniors last season and made his Southern League debut for Hereford in a 2-2 draw against Barnstaple last April.

It is understood United would only pay a fee if Harris breaks into the first team.

Oxford United's youngsters taking on Exeter at the Northcourt in Abingdon. Picture: *OUFC*

League leaders end U18s run

OXFORD United Under-18s' eight-match unbeaten run was ended with 2-0 defeat by league leaders Exeter City at Abingdon United on Monday.

A goal in each half earned victory for the Grecians, with the decider coming just two minutes from time as United pushed the South-West Youth Alliance pacesetters all the way.

It could have been a different story had Kyran Lofthouse's 10th-minute shot been an inch lower.

The forward smashed the ball against the bar with the Exeter keeper well beaten but, unfortunately for United, the ball bounced down and away.

Shortly afterwards the visitors took the lead from a snap shot as Exeter, the last team to beat Oxford in September, finished clinically from inside the Oxford area.

At the other end both Dejon Noel-Williams and Owen James caused problems for the Exeter defenders, and with Albie Hopkins and Lofthouse both also looking to get forward at every opportunity, this was an open and entertaining game.

With the U's pushing forward looking to get on level terms they were always susceptible to Exeter breaking quickly and in the 88th minute the visitors took advantage to seal the points and extend their lead at the top.

United welcome second-placed Swindon Town to the Northcourt for derby day on Saturday.

Hopeful win can spark festive success

MATCH winner Alex Mowatt believes Tuesday's progress in the Checkatrade Trophy can be the catalyst to a winning Christmas period for Oxford United.

The attacking midfielder arrowed his 93rd minute drive with precision into the bottom corner to send United into the next round as penalties loomed.

The Barnsley loanee said: "We need to take the positives out of the game. It wasn't the best of games but we've won it and we're through into the next round – but on to Doncaster [at home] on Saturday now.

"There are lots of games over Christmas so it will be good to get a win and build momentum going through the festive period."

It was an entertaining cup tie but United, by Mowatt's own admission, weren't at their best, although progress to the next round was the most important thing.

The 22-year-old said: "It was one of those games you want to win no matter what the performance was like. All the boys want to play at Wembley and that's what we're playing for."

It was also a memorable night for United youngster Malachi Napa who made his senior debut for the club.

The highly rated 18-year-old forward replaced James Henry on 65 minutes to provide Mowatt with the assist, said it was "a great feeling to make his professional debut".

There was also a late run out for fellow youngster Shandon Baptiste.

Belles chime as United concede five goals

OUFCW

ALREADY-ELIMINATED Oxford United Women were heavily beaten 5-1 by Doncaster Rovers Belles in the FA WSL Continental Tyres Cup and their last home game of 2017.

Heading into the match having lost their first three games of the competition, the U's knew they were already out of the competition.

However, they fielded a strong side and looked to take the game to Doncaster – but fell behind after 60 seconds. Oxford goalie Claire Skinner collected a Rebecca Rayner headed effort, but the referee and assistant referee controversially agreed the ball was fully over the line.

Not long after, Doncaster and Rayner had their second when the striker found some space in the box after a slick passing move to slot home.

The game's third goal arrived on 12 minutes when defender Hannah Short found the back of the net with a flicked header.

Unfortunately for United, that was the end of their scoring and the Belles pulled away in the second half.

Goals from Christie Murray and Jessica Sigsworth within five minutes of each other gave the away side a 4-1 lead before Murray scored her second, a terrific long-range shot, condemning Oxford to a 5-1 defeat.

United, who only scored once and conceded 19 games in their four cup group matches, can put their cup misery behind them when they visit London Bees in WSL2 on Saturday.

Action from Saturday's game Picture: *Dan McClue/OUFCW*

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Last-gasp heartbreak

City concede in 95th minute to miss out on FA Cup history

By George Welch

Notts County 3

Richard Duffy 31, Jon Stead 56 (p), Jorge Grant 90+5

Oxford City 2

Rob Sinclair 53, Matt Paterson 73

Attendance: 5,092 (274 away)

Rob Sinclair pulled City level early in the second half and below, players applaud the fans who travelled to support them
Pictures: *Michael Allen*

DEVASTATED Oxford City boss Mark Jones admitted their heartbreaking FA Cup defeat at Notts County on Saturday made some of his squad cry.

The National League South strugglers were seconds away from having their name in the third round draw for the first time in their history, only to be denied by a 95th minute County winner.

The dogged Hoops lost 3-2 but twice fought back from behind to level the tie through Rob Sinclair and Matt Paterson in front of the TV cameras.

A gutted Jones said: "It was heartbreaking. There were a few tears in the dressing room.

"The boys have given everything and we were seconds away from achieving a result and getting them back to Marsh Lane.

"We thought we were in the hat for the third round. We were so, so close – it couldn't have been any closer."

Oxford started brightly but fell behind after half an hour when Richard Duffy somehow bundled home the opener.

Former Premier League striker Jon Stead hit the post for the Magpies in the second half but effervescent City charged up the other end and Sinclair fired home a deflected equaliser.

County responded quickly and had their lead back three minutes later when Stead scored from the penalty spot.

But City don't know when they're beaten and the magic of the FA Cup was almost tangible when Paterson, scorer of the winner at Colchester, struck again, converting a Zak McEachran cut back from close range.

The final whistle was just moments away when Oxfordshire-born Jorge Grant struck from close range for the League Two high-flyers to end City's remarkable cup run.

The part-timers, who last week revealed debts of nearly £1million, won £42,500 in progressing to the second round, collecting a further £72,000 for the tie being televised.

Jones added: "We couldn't have given anymore and to go down in the game twice we showed tremendous character, quality and spirit to get the equaliser on two occasions.

"Sometimes you need the footballing gods on your side but it wasn't to be. "Even the Notts County players said 'you didn't deserve that, your lads are a credit to you'.

"Hopefully we'll have many more days like this but at the moment it's absolutely devastating."

Hat-trick hero Paterson lifts spirits after FA Cup woe

TOP scorer Matt Paterson helped Oxford City get over Saturday's FA Cup disappointment by grabbing all three goals in a 3-1 win against Truro City on Tuesday.

The hat-trick hero netted his 11th, 12th and 13th goals of the season as the Hoops overcame the National League high-flyers, who could have moved to within a point of the summit with a win.

Instead, City climbed two places to 17th and lifted themselves away from the drop zone.

Striker Paterson gave his side the lead on 18 minutes when he tucked home a rebounded Christian Oxlade-Chamberlain cross.

The lead was doubled on the hour when he connected with a Godfrey Poku through ball to slot home with ease.

Truro pulled one back almost instantly thanks to an Andrew Neal strike but Paterson wrapped up the points with a 93rd minute goal to complete his treble.

The 28-year-old, who claimed the match ball, praised his "on fire" team-mates as the City players put Saturday's disappointment behind them.

He said: "Since the Colchester game [1-0 win in the FA Cup first round] confidence has risen through the squad and the lads started to believe in themselves a lot more.

"We've got a lot of good players here, it's just trying to get the best out of them and maybe it just took us time to gel."

City, three points above the division's trapdoor, visit seventh-placed St Albans City on Saturday.

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